

Fresh allegations by Soviet miners

Fraud squad enquiry into NUM cash

By MARK SOUSTER AND TIM JONES

SCOTLAND Yard has begun an investigation into the financial affairs of the National Union of Mineworkers after serious allegations of untraced money were made by a Soviet miners' leader.

The inquiry into Arthur Scargill's handling of £1.4 million got under way when two official complaints reached the Serious Fraud Office.

The move came as union members appeared to head off legal proceedings against Mr Scargill, the union president, and others who yesterday were given three months by the High Court to explain what has happened to more than £3 million which they believe should have gone to help suffering miners during the 1984-5 strike.

Allegations of theft, forgery and false accounting are understood to be detailed in two separate letters, one from a Soviet miners' leader, Sergei Massalovich, and the other from an unidentified former senior employee of the NUM.

Mr Massalovich is concerned about the whereabouts of large but unspecified amounts of money raised from 40,000 miners in the Vorkuta region of northern Russia in 1984. His letter of complaint, sent two weeks ago, was received by the Serious Fraud Office on Wednesday and passed to Commander Alan Fry, head of the Metropolitan Police Fraud Squad.

The investigation is being

led by Detective Chief Superintendent Tony McStravik, deputy head of the commercial branch, assisted by a detective chief inspector. Last night they were trying to contact Mr Massalovich, who has no telephone and lives in one room with six others in Vorkuta, a city closed to Westerners in the heartland of the polar coalfield. It is understood he will return to Britain to be interviewed. A decision will then be made on whether further action is warranted.

Mr Massalovich, aged 32, a mining engineer and member of the executive of the Vorkuta strike committee, spent six weeks in Britain earlier this summer at the invitation of the anti-communist magazine, *Soviet Labour Review*, as an activist for unofficial Soviet miners' groups. While in the country he addressed the annual conference of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers in Weymouth. He returned home on July 14.

According to George Miller, editor of the review which is based in south London, Mr Massalovich decided to complain after reading reports of the findings of the Lightman enquiry. "He felt he should add his own voice. He acted totally independently," Mr Massalovich will report to unofficial Soviet miners' groups which will then decide whether they also should make a formal complaint.

Mr Miller said Mr Massalovich was angry and upset that money he had donated had gone to the International Miners Organisation, a group to which he was opposed. He and miners in the Soviet Union had believed until this month that the money had gone to help British families. They feel that is where it should still go.

"One of his friends' wives had given a gold ring to be melted down in aid of the British miners who they were told were living on the streets without food. It was a genuine response on humanitarian grounds," Mr Miller said.

Last summer striking Russian miners were antagonised when Mr Scargill, as president of the IMO, intervened in their dispute and urged them to support the official trade unions in Moscow by not forming a breakaway movement.

The question of exactly how much was raised from three million Soviet miners who donated a day's pay will be raised by miners' representatives in the Soviet parliament at next month's session of the Congress of People's Deputies. By October the full amount should be known. At least 30 million roubles are believed to have been raised, or £3.6 million at today's exchange rates.

The investigation was launched as the High Court agreed to suspend legal action to give Mr Scargill, and Alain Simon, general secretary of the Paris-based International Miners Organisation, three months to account for more than £3 million of Soviet and other cash, including interest, which the Lightman report said belonged to the NUM.

The four-member NUM sub-committee charged with tracing the money said after the hearing it was confident the matter could be settled without being involved in the publicly embarrassing process of accusing its own president. Michael Briggs, applying for the legal proceedings to be suspended, told the court the NUM does not know for sure where the money is or how much is left although it believes the residue is held by the two men and by Norman West, a union-sponsored MEP, in IMO accounts in Ireland and Austria.

The court heard that the largest single amount was a contribution of £1.4 million by Soviet and other East European miners through a substantial part consists of cash contributions to trusts run by Mr Scargill and Peter Heathfield, the NUM general secretary.

The committee, executive members of the NUM, agreed to suspend the court action after securing promises from M Simon that none of the money would be moved from the accounts. M Simon, whose organisation's finances were described by Gavin Lightman, QC, in his report as "practically impenetrable" also promised to provide the men with answers to questions about where the money is and how much it amounts to.

The IMO Dublin account also benefited, according to Mr Lightman, from the £580,000 transferred into it by Mr Scargill from the Miners Action Committee Fund, which was controlled and operated by him.

Bruce Brodie, the union's solicitor, said: "We have for the first time full and voluntary co-operation from the general secretary of the international union to which the NUM is affiliated."

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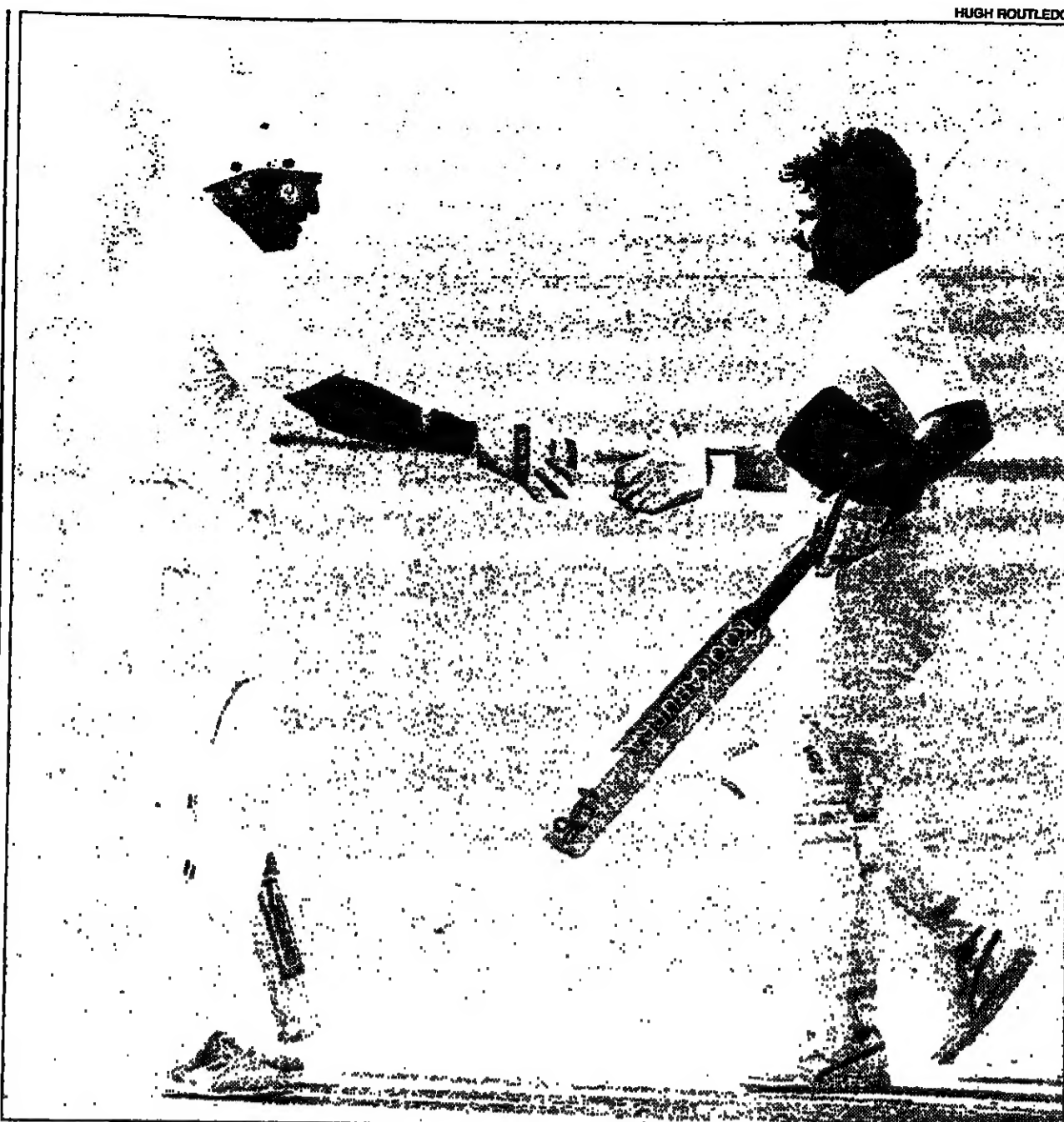
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Century makers: England's captain, Graham Gooch (left), congratulates Allan Lamb on his century against India at Lord's. At the close Gooch, 194, and Lamb, 104, had helped England to 359 for two. Report, page 38

Kuwait yields to Iraq threats

From CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN CAIRO

TENSION subsided in the Gulf region yesterday as the terms of an Egyptian-brokered peace plan to end the bitter oil and border dispute between Iraq and Kuwait were swiftly put into effect.

As diplomatic sources reported the start of a pull-back from the disputed frontier of a large force of Iraqi troops dispatched there to put pressure on Kuwait, there was a consensus in diplomatic circles that Iraq appeared to have secured a number of its goals by using heavy-handed tactics.

According to Western and Arab diplomats, Kuwait has offered nearly half of the \$2.4 billion (£1.5 billion) being demanded by Iraq as compensation for oil allegedly extracted from wells on Iraqi territory.

There were also signs in Geneva of a greater flexibility being displayed by Kuwait at the meeting of the oil producers' cartel. Observers said that the Kuwaitis appeared more willing to see a rise in the benchmark price of a barrel of oil from the present rate of \$18 and had pledged to stick by production quotas they had previously floated at will.

"One aim of the Egyptian diplomatic drive has been to disguise the fact that Kuwait has already begun to give in even before the weekend talks in Saudi Arabia," said one Cairo-based diplomat. "So far, Iraq has come out on top."

● Petrol up: Shell UK yesterday became the second big oil company to raise its price for four-star petrol by more than £2 a gallon, reacting to the Opec-induced rise in the international cost of petrol.

Saving face, page 11
Leading article, page 13
BP warning, page 23

In the red, page 23

Kinnock alerts party for election next June

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NEIL Kinnock yesterday told the shadow cabinet to prepare for a general election in June next year, warning them to be ready for the government to relax its high interest rates and tough spending policies to clear the path for a snap poll.

The Labour leadership, meeting in south London as parliament rose for the summer recess, decided to intensify campaigning over the coming months on the economy, Europe, the quality of life, and the family.

At a press conference last night at Maritime House, the headquarters of the National Union of Seamen, Mr Kinnock said Labour would have to combat the Conservative strategy of "lies and bribes".

Despite the government's present economic difficulties, it would slacken off its squeeze and encourage spending at some stage. He said: "You can more or less set your watches for an election between four and six months from the time the slackening starts."

The Labour leader said there had been some slippage

in the so-called golden scenario for an election early next summer, but it was still possible that, in desperation, the government would ignore economic realities. "We are working on the basis of the primary date for the general election being in June of 1991."

In an end-of-term report to the shadow cabinet, Mr Kinnock concentrated on putting his team on an election footing. "The Tory policy will be to spend a little and slacken off a little in order to open up a short-run opportunity to call a snap election."

He said that John Major, the chancellor, was deliberately handing out bad news at present to reduce expectations, and so enable him to exaggerate any subsequent small shift the other way.

With Labour enjoying a sustained lead in the opinion polls, yesterday's gathering, unlike similar summits in the past, was held in a buoyant atmosphere. Mr Kinnock said

there had been justifiable satisfaction, but no complacency, at the way the policy review had been completed and the public response to it. He claimed that Labour was now known to be the party that sought to give opportunity so that people got prosperity; a party that was for the competitive economy, the fair society, and the exercise by Britain of maximum influence on Europe's future.

Labour's policies on European economic and political union are expected to be developed over the coming months. After the annual conference in the autumn, but before the Community's inter-governmental conference on

Continued on page 22, col 7

Liberal offer, page 2
Ben Fimlott, page 12

ICI jobs lost in sale of fertiliser division

By OUR CITY STAFF

ICI is to sell its loss-making fertiliser division to a Finnish company, cutting 640 jobs in the process.

The group also announced results for the first half of its financial year, showing pre-tax profits down 21 per cent to £733 million. The setback knocked 65p off the shares to £10.40, in turn affecting the stock market. The FT-SE 100 index fell 20.6 to 2,344.1.

A total of 540 employees will transfer to work for the new owner, Kemira Oy. ICI said some of the 640 jobs lost by the closure of the Billingham production plants

and the Teesside headquarters would be transferred to other operations in the Northeast.

Mr Fred Higgs, the Transport and General Workers' national officer and chief negotiator, said: "Most people were extremely worried about the fertiliser division. But for ICI to opt out of the business completely came as a shock to all of us. Once this goes ahead, there will be not be a British-owned fertiliser manufacturer in the UK anywhere."

ICI will receive less than £100 million for the business.

Details, page 23

National Power may drop cup sponsorship

By STEVE ACTESON

THE proposed £4 million sponsorship of the Football League Cup by National Power was in some doubt yesterday as the nationalised industry announced 5,000 redundancies and losses of £650 million.

The embarrassing announcement has also brought into question plans to privatise the company. A spokesman admitted yesterday that the sponsorship deal had not yet been approved by the board, although the first fixtures in the third most important domestic football competition are only

a month away. The competition was previously sponsored by the Milk Marketing Board and Littlewoods.

National Power, which paid £2 million to sponsor independent television's coverage of the recent World Cup, had been expected to provide sponsorship worth £1 million a year, linked to the retail price index. The announcement came as an unwelcome surprise to Football League officials who thought the sponsorship deal had been signed last week.

In the red, page 23

Protest after marines board Haughey's yacht

By EDWARD GORMAN IRISH AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE private yacht of Charles Haughey, the Irish prime minister, has been boarded and searched by a routine Royal Marine patrol in the disputed waters of Carlingford Lough which separates Co Down in Northern Ireland from Co Louth in the Republic.

The Irish Government has protested the matter through the department of foreign affairs in Dublin with the Northern Ireland Office in Belfast and Mr Haughey, who was not on the boat at the time, was said to be "not exactly pleased."

The incident, which happened on Sunday immediately started rumours, denied by military sources in Northern Ireland, that the crew and skipper of *Celtic Mist*, a converted trawler, were subjected to abuse by the Marines even

after being told who the yacht belonged to.

Speculation was further fuelled when it was discovered that Ireland's most heavily-armed naval ship, the coastal patrol vessel *Orla*, moved into the lough on Tuesday, ostensibly on routine fishery protection and security duties but unofficially to parade the Irish flag. The *Orla* is a gunboat brought from the Royal Navy two years ago and armed with a 76mm gun and twin heavy and medium machine guns.

According to British military sources, the *Celtic Mist* was searched while on the move as part of routine operations designed to deter the IRA from smuggling weapons into Northern Ireland by sea. A statement said the yacht's skipper, Irish businessman Brian Stafford, signed customary boarding forms and made no objection at the time and has not done

since, to the Marines' request to come aboard.

Far from insulting Mr Stafford, it is said the Marines thanked him and even saluted him before speeding away. Mr Haughey is now aboard the yacht which is cruising off the Donegal coast.

While a welcome alternative to the grinding familiarity of most Anglo-Irish disputes, this episode nevertheless points up the conflicting claims by Britain and Ireland to all waters around Northern Ireland.

Article 2 of the Irish constitution, a major obstacle to political progress in Ulster, lays claim to the whole territory of Ireland and its waters. In Carlingford Lough, the border is represented by a so-called "mean line" running roughly down the middle, on each side of which the two navies patrol. Irish nationalists do not recognise the line.



Haughey on board Celtic Mist: 'not exactly pleased'

Saturday Review

Are looks a liability?



'Meryl Streep is beautiful. I'm not.' Michelle Pfeiffer talks about acting and the trials of shuffling off a skin deep image

A capital place for children



Alan Franks explores summer London and finds a wealth of activity for the discerning child

The murderous mountainside



The Matterhorn has claimed 500 lives since it was first climbed 125 years ago. Ronald Faux on the mountain that still draws an army of potential conquerors

Plus...

The Soviet army's retreat to Moscow, swimwear-style dresses, Bernard Levin on the Peloponnesian war, Jonathan Meades puts on a tie (spotty) to eat (poorly), Usk Castle's luxuriant garden, arts, books and much more

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INSIDE

Treasury accused

Alastair Morton, chief executive of Eurotunnel, blames the Treasury for continuing delays in building the Channel Tunnel rail link. In an article in *The Times*, he attacks the attitude to funding transport infrastructure.

"Britain's decline over three decades is littered with Treasury vetoes on investment. In infrastructure, whether transportation or training, they risk proving fatal to our future, which is in Europe." Page 25

Race conflict

A man was jailed for life at the Central Criminal Court yesterday for the murder of an Indian taxi driver he left dying in the road after stabbing him 58 times. The case has revealed a disturbing conflict between police and a group of activists which monitors racial harassment. Page 5

Reshuffle benefit

Cabinet ministers dropped in reshuffles will in future receive nearly £9,000 in severance pay if a new Bill goes through the Commons. The Bill also provides for the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor to retire on half-pay, and for improved payments to MPs widows. Page 8

Waldheim attack

Two protesters, Rabbi Avraham Weiss and Jacob Davidson, were dragged away after shouting "Shame for meeting Nazi Waldheim", interrupting President Kuri Waldheim's reception of the West German and Czechoslovak presidents at the opening of the Salzburg Festival. Page 9

Degree results

Degrees from the University of Dundee are published today. Page 29

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MacGregor proposes to increase emphasis on teaching historical facts

By TOM GILES

THE Government is to allow greater freedom in the teaching of history as part of the National Curriculum, while increasing the emphasis on the grasp of historical facts and dates.

John MacGregor, the education secretary, yesterday announced proposals for the study of history for children in England, aged five to 16, in which many of the compulsory requirements recommended in the final report of the history working group in April have been dropped.

The proposals come after months of public debate on the balance between dates and understanding in history caused by the publication of the working party report. They have been sent to members of National Curriculum Council, who will consult teachers and other groups before submitting its own recommendations to the education secretary in December.

Mr MacGregor said yesterday that pupils

would be assessed primarily on their historical knowledge and understanding and would receive a "balanced and thorough grounding" in British, world and European history. Underlining the shift in emphasis towards facts, he said that the working group's title for the first target for learning history was not clear: it would therefore be changed from "Understanding history in its setting" to "Knowledge and understanding in history".

"Although I recognise that all the attainment targets proposed by the working group presuppose the mastery of knowledge, the first target seems to me to measure most directly what pupils have learnt from their historical studies," he said. Marks used in the calculation of National Curriculum test scores would therefore be weighted in favour of this target.

Whitehall sources said that the decision reflected common agreement between Margaret Thatcher and Mr MacGregor that the original

recommendations of the working group had not attached enough importance to children's learning of facts. "This shows that both regard the facts as extremely important. The changes reflect the Prime Minister's particular interest in this area."

The second and third attainment targets recommended by the working party are unchanged under the new proposals. Teachers must therefore ensure that pupils "acquire and evaluate historical information" and develop "points of view and interpretations of history" but the importance of these skills will be downgraded by the extra weighting given to knowledge and understanding of history.

Although the essential content of the detailed history courses would remain intact, Mr MacGregor said that he would drop the working group's decision to make compulsory exemplary and illustrative details. In the Medieval Realm course (1066 to 1500) for children aged 12 to 14, for example, teachers would no longer have to

give details of the Battle of Bosworth, Wat Tyler or the origins of parliament. Such information would instead be made optional in order to simplify the courses.

The number of compulsory courses would also be reduced for children between the ages of seven and 14 to reduce what Mr MacGregor described as the apparent complexity of the working group's proposals. The reduction in course detail follows the concern expressed by Mrs Thatcher and those on the right wing of the Conservative party that the original recommendations would inhibit teachers' creativity and professionalism.

The influence of Mrs Thatcher in drawing up the proposals was criticised by Jack Straw, Labour's education spokesman, who said: "Factual knowledge is essential to the teaching of history, but reports of the prime minister's interference in the history curriculum raise quite different questions with sinister implications. She appears to want to lay down what facts children

should be taught, but the national curriculum can only work if there is wide agreement about it across the political spectrum."

In spite of pressure to put greater emphasis on courses in British history, Mr MacGregor has left intact courses covering topics in Asian, European, and ancient Mediterranean history. Dr Chris Husbands, of the Historical Association, which represents 7,000 history teachers and specialists, welcomed the decision. "Mr MacGregor should be applauded for not cutting the courses back to a British history alone."

A judgment on testing arrangements for history, crucially on whether facts and dates should be tested separately from other elements of the curriculum, will not be made until next year when the Schools Examination and Assessment Council receive the amended proposals. Mr MacGregor has insisted that the original timetable to begin National Curriculum history in the autumn of next year can still be met.

Labour shuns Liberal deal to split power in Liverpool

By RONALD FAUX

THE ruling Labour group on Liverpool city council has rejected offers of a two-year power sharing deal with the Liberal Democrats aimed at bringing financial stability to the city after the suspension of more councillors by the Labour party's National Executive Committee.

Altogether 29 councillors have been suspended. The latest group of 14 refused to support rent rises to balance the city's budget.

Harry Rimmer, the Labour leader of the council, said yesterday there would be no coalition in the city. Only two months ago, he said, the overwhelming majority of Liverpool voters had voted for a mainstream Labour administration to run the city and the Liberal Democrats had lost heavily. "In the circumstances I can see no purpose in entering into a pact with them," he said.

Paul Clark, leader of the Liberal Democrats on the council, said rejection of an agreement meant that the executive decision to suspend the Labour councillors was no more than a public relations exercise. "He (Mr Rimmer) has a straightforward choice of entering into a coalition with us or allowing the militants to continue to control affairs in Liverpool," he said.

Refusal to enter into a coalition could spell trouble for Labour if the suspended Labour councillors and the Liberal Democrats join forces to oppose issues designed to bring the city's finances into good order. Labour could be reduced to 33 "moderates" against 27 Liberal Democrats and the 29 "hard-left" Labour supporters.

Mr Rimmer believes the suspended councillors will continue to vote with the Labour group on important issues, but other sources in the Labour party think this confidence is less well-founded.

Phil Kelly, the city trea-

surer, will tell the finance committee on Monday that Liverpool is heading towards a £3.6 million deficit by the end of the financial year. That could worsen if the council's policy of selling land and other assets runs into difficulties because of the sluggish property market.

The target of £83.2 million in capital receipts seems to stand little chance of being achieved and the finance committee will be told that the potential for income this year now looks to be closer to £58 million.

The Labour party yesterday demanded that the prime minister set up an independent inquiry into the financial arrangements made during the sale of the Rover group to British Aerospace (Richard Ford writes).

The opposition also called on the National Audit Office and the Commons public accounts committee to reopen their own investigations after claims that evidence of additional "sweeteners" had been kept from them. Gordon Brown, the shadow trade secretary, said that an independent enquiry was needed after the discovery that MPs were not given all the evidence about the sale.

Assurances about the question of future financial assistance for BAe were given in a letter sent by the trade and industry department to Professor Roland Smith, chairman of BAe, in July 1988. The department failed to show the letter to MPs when other correspondence regarding the sale was made available.

Mr Brown said that evidence he was sending to Margaret Thatcher would demonstrate that despite a promise that all the correspondence and details about the sale of Rover had been issued, a vital letter had been kept back by the government.

Leading article, page 13

Women urged to be more positive

By RICHARD FORD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WOMEN are still failing to be chosen for the most senior posts on government bodies in spite of an improvement in their overall representation on them since 1986.

Yesterday they were urged to stop underplaying their skills on application forms and encouraged to adopt a more positive approach to ensure their names enter the system for public appointments.

At the launch of an advisory handbook aimed at increasing the number of women considered for public appointments, Angela Rumbold, minister of state at the Home Office and chairman of the ministerial group on women's issues, said that women formed 23 per cent of those serving on public bodies, a rise of 3.9 per cent between 1986-9. "I fear it is not good enough. We are making progress and I believe we can see that number grow."

Officials in the Cabinet Office said that many of those appointed were to the low and

middle ranks of public bodies, and that women may face discrimination if it is insisted that they must be at the top of a career before being considered for senior posts. Women were urged to interpret broadly the requirements for senior appointments particularly if they had taken time off from their careers to have a family.

The handbook gave a warning that a requirement or custom that people be at the top of a profession might exclude women with relevant skills being given serious consideration by ministers. "It may be discriminatory against women who have not yet reached the highest levels, or reached them later in life because earlier in their careers they were obliged to put more time and energy than most male colleagues into meeting family commitments," the handbook said.

General Chapple also argued that it would not be possible to sustain the capab-

Defence chiefs face complex decisions on Rhine

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE status, structure and deployment of the reduced British Army of the Rhine are the main issues confronting the military staffs responsible for implementing the changes announced on Wednesday by Tom King, the defence secretary.

There is no ready-made blueprint for reorganising the three divisions stationed in West Germany, consisting of 19 regiments, 12 of them armoured, into a 25,000-strong army. Under Mr King's plan, there will be one division left in West Germany and one at home, which, for the first time, will have armoured brigades. This is an important step. Today's fourth division, committed to the Continent but based at home, is purely infantry. It means that members of tank regiments returning to the UK will have a role.

Before troops are withdrawn, however, there will have to be a complex formula, drawn up and agreed with Bonn, under which half the estate - barracks, garrisons, workshops and other facilities - are handed back to the Germans. Most of the barracks were taken over by the British at the end of the second world war and British tenancy was formally arranged later by the Status of Forces Agreement.

Land for defence purposes is provided free of charge by Bonn, but the defence ministry owns some of the buildings and other facilities. Many facilities are either privately leased or owned by the West German government and made available without charge, with the defence ministry assuming responsibility for maintenance and repairs.

According to diplomatic sources, the government consulted Bonn about the proposal to keep 25,000 soldiers in West Germany. Bonn approved. Nevertheless, the government is aware that the five-year timetable for the withdrawal and even the 25,000 figure itself may have to change within a year or two if Bonn puts pressure on Britain and other NATO allies to hasten the withdrawal of troops.

The presence of 55,000 troops is covered by the terms of Article VI of Protocol II to the modified Brussels Treaty of 1954, under which Britain is committed to maintaining four divisions and the Second Tactical Air Force in West Germany. It is unlikely that Bonn will want a new agreement that specifies a fixed number of British troops.

The figure of 25,000 was decided after a considerable battle between those in the defence ministry who wanted to see a more drastic cut in the army overall, and General Sir John Chapple, the chief of the general staff, who argued that 25,000 was the lowest possible number if the British Army of the Rhine was to maintain an influential presence in Central Europe and if Britain was to continue providing a significant contribution to NATO.

Anything below that figure, it was felt, and Britain would lose the opportunity to hold key command appointments in West Germany. "We must be able to command a place at the top table," one army source said.

General Chapple also argued that it would not be possible to sustain the capab-



Ground crew prepare Flight Lieutenant John Campbell's Phantom for takeoff at RAF Wattisham (top); and (below) one of 56 Squadron's two VCs, Captain Albert Ball, killed in action in 1917, and the squadron crest

Unsure future for the phoenix squadron that has risen twice

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE crest of 56 Squadron, RAF, is a phoenix and its motto "What if heaven falls" is not without significance in this piping time of peace. Disbanded and re-formed twice in its 74-year history, the squadron may find that heaven falls on it yet again as the armed forces face substantial reductions.

Should that happen, it would end a glorious career that began in June 1916, when 56 Squadron was formed as part of the Royal Flying Corps, two years before the RAF was born. They went to France in April 1917 and by the end of the first world war they had shot down 427 enemy aircraft and accumulated two VCs.

One of those decorations

was awarded posthumously to Captain Albert Ball, the Allies' answer to the Red Baron, who brought down the squadron's first hit over Amiens in his Nieuport biplane on April 23. By the time he was shot down he had killed only two weeks later he had 47 German aircraft to his credit. Captain James McCudden, the other VC, was more fortunate. He survived to have it pinned to his breast by King George V.

Disbanded in 1920 and re-formed a week later, 56 Squadron and its Sopwith Snipes survived until the second world war, when its Hurricanes joined in the Battle of Britain. During the war the squadron shot down 130 enemy aircraft and 63 flying bombs with its Typhoons, Tempests and Spitfires.

The end of the war brought

another disbandment, but only for a day. On April 1946, it was re-formed to fly the Gloster Meteor, which served 56 Squadron better than its replacement, the Supermarine Swift, which lasted in service barely a year. The squadron was equipped with Lightnings in 1961 and had a nine-year tour of duty in Cyprus. It came home to Wattisham, Suffolk, in 1976 to fly Phantoms. Now, however, the Phantoms, under the command of Wing Commander Barry Titchener, must soon go the way of the Typhoon and the Hurricane, for obsolescence in fighting machines makes the ageing of man seem almost slow.

The squadron has survived two wars with honour and justifiable pride. The peace may be a little more difficult.

A bad case of business blues

FOR about 100 years a thriving family business with headquarters near London Bridge has crafted brilliantly embroidered regimental colours, tailored tunics of bright red, dark green or blue cloth, Sam Brownes, belts, caps, hats; all the paraphernalia of ceremonial attire associated with the British Army (Michael Evans writes).

Today, Hobson & Sons, which employs 200 people and has factories in Thundersley, Essex, and Deptford, south London, is one of

thousands of firms facing a less certain future after the announcement that the Army is to be reduced by 40,000 men. The defence ministry is Hobson's largest customer, although only a third of the 3,000 ceremonial tunics and trousers produced each year go to British regiments.

Richard Turpin, manager of the embroidery department, said: "We have been very badly hit by the defence ministry's moratorium. They have not given us a single contract." Mr Turpin, aged

41, has a son aged nine who might one day join the business. "That's if there is a business to join." He added: "We do ceremonial items. We used to do a lot of exports to Africa but a lot of the countries went Marxist and they don't wear ceremonial uniforms any more. They just wear combat uniforms. So the MoD is our biggest customer."

"We make uniforms for many of the regiments, except the Guards. Theirs are made in Savile Row."

Offshore workers to strike over safety

By KERRY GILL

THE North Sea offshore oil and gas industries are expected to be affected by widespread strikes during the next three months as part of a union campaign to impose improved safety measures.

At a meeting of the offshore industry liaison committee (OILC) in Glasgow yesterday, Ronald McDonald, chairman of the unofficial union, said members would be balloted on industrial action aimed at causing maximum disruption when most installations closed for summer maintenance. It has been estimated unofficially that the disruption could cost up to £12 billion in lost production.

Speaking after Wednesday's helicopter crash in the Brent field, which killed six men, Mr McDonald said offshore workers were angry and frustrated. It was the latest in a number of incidents highlighting the risks of offshore work. He refused to give details of the action but it is likely to take the form of rolling strikes affecting specific companies and contractors.

The bodies of the six men were recovered from the wreckage on the seabed yesterday and flown to Aberdeen. The helicopter's cockpit voice recorder was taken to the RAF Accident Investigation Bureau at Farnborough, Hampshire, for the enquiry into the crash.

Ulster talks date is postponed

Peter Brooke, the Northern Ireland Secretary, yesterday failed to make a statement in the Commons on a starting date for inter-party talks in Northern Ireland, and indicated that his initiative would remain dormant until September (Edward Gorman writes).

He had set yesterday as the deadline for an announcement which would have brought the first phase of the project to an end and which he had hoped would help to maintain momentum and prevent the process unravelling.

Continued disagreement over Dublin's role in talks with unionist leaders, however, prevented him from making a statement.

Daltrey award

ROGER Daltrey, the rock singer, was awarded £150,000 for damages in the High Court yesterday over pollution which killed up to half a million fish at his Dorset trout farm. The award was against The Home Farm, a Iwerne Minster, where a fertilizer leak in August 1986 entered a river and caused damage at Mr Daltrey's Iwerne Springs fish farm. The Home Farm had admitted liability.

New charge

An Irish student held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act was yesterday further charged with conspiring to cause an explosion when he appeared at Lambeth magistrates' court. Kevin Barry O'Donnell, 20, of Wilburton Hill, near Gosnell, Stafford, had been charged with possessing firearms with intent to endanger life.

Life for boy, 16

Lee Costello, a schoolboy aged 16 who hanged on to death Tasleem Akhtar, aged 11, near their homes in Sparkhill, Birmingham, last December, was jailed for life yesterday after pleading guilty to murder at Birmingham Crown Court.

CORRECTION

The managing director of the Daily Telegraph firm, mentioned in the Charles Wintour media column on Wednesday, is Mr P. J. D. Cooke, not Mr Jeremy Decides, who is the executive editor.

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By PAUL WILKINSON

Ending his closing speech to the jury on the ninety-third day of a trial, Mr Chadwick said: "The law has shown how ambition and greed can cause men to behave dishonestly and dishonourably. This case is not about minor breaches of technical rules relating to takeovers. The Guinness takeover of Distillers was a shocking example of dishonest conduct. The dishonest conduct is that of these four defendants. Mr Saunders was so determined to win that

Yesterday's move in the Lords is the latest in the fishing rights dispute which has developed into a legal test case with constitutional implications. The European Court held earlier this year that courts in the United Kingdom could suspend provisions of an act of parliament, pending a final ruling on whether they breached EC law.

By ROBIN YOUNG

In Samoa it is important not to make any noise even when swimming offshore in the early evening for fear of disrupting the Samoan prayer period, and in Nepal all

Many countries including Brunei, India, Japan, Korea and Thailand expect visitors to remove their shoes before entering a home or a place of worship, but in Afghanistan showing the soles of one's feet

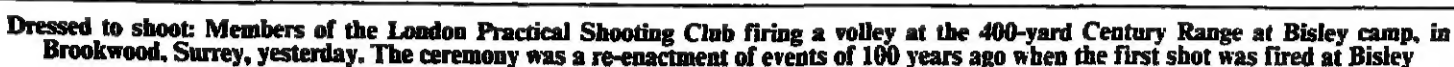
Royal Mail International Business Travel Guide (RMI, 52 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0AA: from July 30, 148/166 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HQ, £19.92.)

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OF

Shirley Finkelstein

Royal Mail International Business Travel Guide (RMI, 52 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0AA: from July 30, 148/166 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HQ, £19.92.)



They were also ordered to pay the estimated £50,000 costs of the appeal and the High Court hearing before Mr Justice Popplewell in March. The judges told Ian Hislop, the editor, that he had 14 days to pay his £10,000 fine and that failure to do so would result in a six-month jail sentence.

The judges said the articles "went far further than fair and temperate criticism" and constituted a serious risk of prejudice. Mr Hislop and Pressdam are considering an appeal to the House of Lords.

Aids has become the leading cause of death among young women in big cities in the United States, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, and could increase infant and child mortality in some areas by 30 per cent, the organisation says. In today's issue of *The Lancet* the prospects are among the bleakest yet produced by WHO on the pandemic, and they are accompanied by warning that in some parts of Africa, the figure for adult

Children 'la


'Regular exercise' regular physical exercise, and lungs work hard enough to published in the *British Medical Journal* (Prentice writes). Girls are less fit than boys at their levels of activity decrease in secondary school, Exeter University found that four boys and nine out of ten girls were fit on three school days a week. **Barbara Amiel**, page 17


BRITISH children take little regular physical exercise, and seldom make their hearts and lungs work hard enough to benefit their health, a study published in the *British Medical Journal* today shows (Thomson Prentice writes). Girls are less physically active than boys, and their levels of activity decrease while they are at secondary school, Exeter University researchers found. Three out of four boys and nine out of ten girls did not have sufficient activity on three school days and one Saturday they were monitored.

Barbara Amiel, page 17

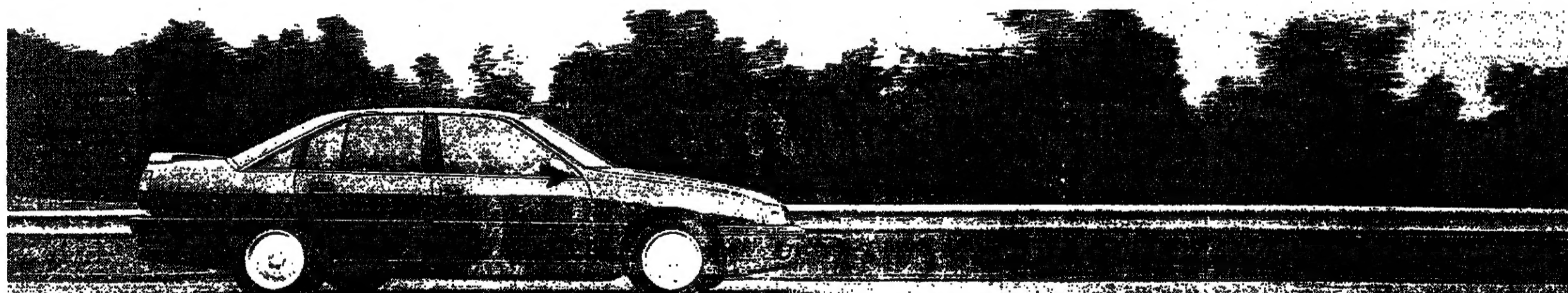
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Sexual themes also attracted criticism, with Dennis Potter's TV serial *Blackeyes* provoking more than 200 complaints about its "gratuitous" sexual content.

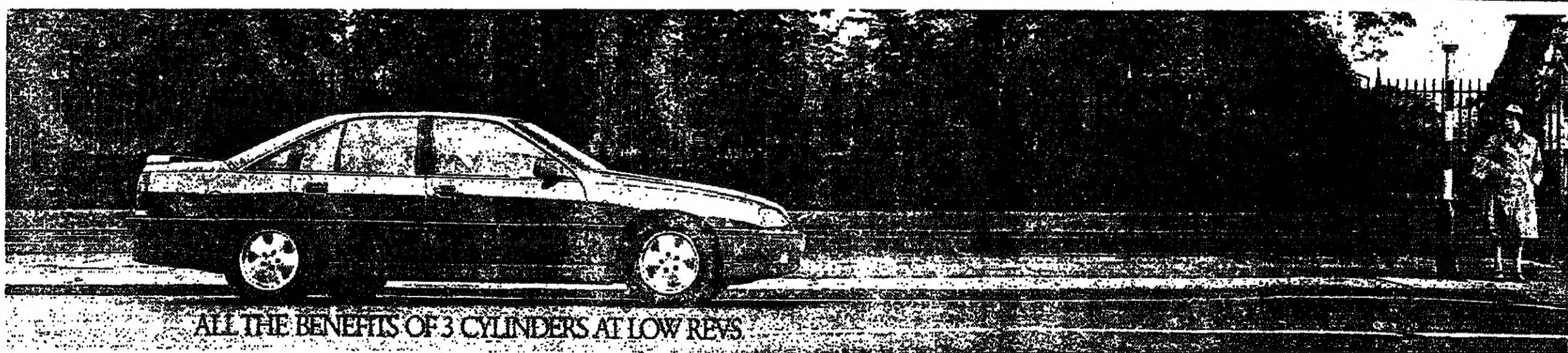
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Judge says murder was not racial

Man who killed Indian taxi driver jailed for life

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

A MAN who left an Indian taxi driver dying in the road after stabbing him 38 times was sentenced at the Central Criminal Court yesterday to life imprisonment. The case led to demonstrations and protests from a group of Asian activists which monitors ethnic harassment after police refused to deal with the crime as a racial killing.

Sentencing Steven Coker, aged 22, the judge said that he was not on public record that there was no evidence the attack was racially motivated. Coker, unemployed, of Southall, west London, was heavily under the influence of drink and

drugs when he stabbed Kuldeep Singh Sekhon, 35, to avoid paying a £2 fare.

Mr Justice Judge told him: "Inflamed by a mixture of drink and drugs, you struck down an innocent stranger working late at night as a cab driver to help meet his family responsibilities. Even now, I can detect no sign of remorse for what you did."

Coker denied murder but the prosecution refused to accept his plea of guilty to manslaughter.

The start of the trial two weeks ago was postponed for a day when the Southall Monitoring Group handed out leaflets outside the court

protesting that the murder of Mr Sekhon, who worked as a caterer at Heathrow but drove a taxi to make extra money, was racial. Two of the leaders were warned by the judge that the leaflets could prejudice potential jurors. However, the judge said yesterday: "The colour of that man did not matter. All that matters is that a good family man was the victim of a wicked crime."

Coker's girlfriend, Sarah Eyles, aged 22, unemployed, from Cranford, west London, left the dock weeping after the jury cleared her of perverting the course of justice by washing his

bloodsoaked clothing. She was also said to have helped Coker to dispose of the murder weapon, but said that she was terrified of him.

Michael Worsley, QC, for the prosecution, said that Coker was "stoned" when he hired Mr Sekhon to drive him to his girlfriend's home on November 11 last year. Mr Sekhon, married with five daughters, was left dead at the end of the short journey by Coker who calmly walked the remaining few yards to Miss Eyles's home.

Coker was said to have been dripping with blood when he arrived and asked her to wash his clothes.

Case highlights conflict between police and monitoring group

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE murder of Kuldeep Singh Sekhon revealed a disturbing conflict between police and a group of activists which monitors racial harassment in west London.

The Southall Monitoring Group (SMG), which has nationwide links with similar groups, said that the killing by Steven Coker, aged 22, was the latest in a series of acts of racial violence and was deliberately "shorn of any racial motivation" by the police. The group says that there have been at least 50 racially motivated murders in Britain in the past ten years and claims that 30,000 racist attacks occur every year.

Police cannot confirm these statistics and say that the Sekhon killing has been cynically used by the Southall group to undermine the painstaking efforts of the police to ease racial tension and to improve community relations. Although it keeps no central statistics, the Home Office accepts that racism is a worryingly large problem and emphasises that there is strong evidence that many incidents are not reported.

After an initiative in 1988 by Sir Peter Imbert, the Metropolitan police commissioner, to combat racism, measures taken in Hounslow, west London, and approved by senior Asian leaders, have been met with scorn by the Southall group. Senior officers claim that police efforts are containing racialism in Hounslow and this view is supported by moderate Asians, including Jagdish Sharma, a borough councillor and chairman of the ethnic minorities sub-committee.

Chief Insp Alan Chambers, the borough's community liaison officer, says that he is concerned about the motives of the SMG. "The group is in danger of polarising the community. They have used this tragic death as a political issue. They have tried to use it to promote the notion that violent racism is rife."

"We are looking at integration, community peace and harmony, and they are working in the opposite direction. They are constantly attempting to undermine the credibility of the police. I don't know what they hope to achieve." He said that three recent attempts to organise a meeting with the Southall group to discuss their differences with police have been ignored. The Crown Prosecution Service said that, on police evidence, it was not its contention that the killing was racial.

Det Supt Stewart Hull, who was in charge of the case, said: "The SMG think it was a racist murder but base it on the absence, to their knowledge, of any other motive. Guessing it was a racial attack is as bad as any other guess. My belief is that it was more to do with robbery or non-payment of fares. If I had any evidence to suggest it was a racist murder I would have made it public."

The Southall group maintains that Coker was a known perpetrator of attacks on Asian families in Ealing and Hounslow and cites as evidence one of two previous convictions for actual bodily harm on an Asian in 1988. Police maintain, however, that the attack was straightforward robbery.

Jagdish Sharma believes the killing was racial, but adds: "I would certainly say senior officers are keen to make people know they are very serious in dealing with racial problems. I say that sometimes the SMG highlights matters and goes beyond the borderline."

David Mayer, locum senior officer of Hounslow racial equality council, said: "I think that race relations here are extremely good, but within some communities and estates there are pockets of serious racism. The police take matters seriously, though there is always room for improvement and there have been cases where they did not react as forcefully as they might. It is not the first time that the Southall

Monitoring Group, which was first funded by the Greater London Council in 1982, has been involved in controversy.

A grant from Hounslow council was frozen earlier this year while an internal review was carried out after allegations by two former case workers. The review found "weaknesses in the administrative and financial practices at SMG" and laid down a number of conditions for its management. However, it was agreed to release outstanding grant support suspended from last year's allocation and funding for the first two quarters of 1990, which has been set at £27,185.

The neighbouring borough of Ealing, which had agreed a grant of £40,000 plus another £18,300 if available for the year, withdrew all support on May 30 when the local election returned a Conservative administration.

The SMG was responsible for setting up the Sekhon family support group, which called on "all anti-racists to

an SMG-organised march in west London on the day of Mr Sekhon's funeral as well as a strike by mini-cab drivers and others.

Police, who maintain that the demonstrations were politically motivated, had already clashed with the Southall group over another notorious case last year involving the Kajlas, an Asian family hounded out of their office on the Sparrow Farm estate in Feltham after 18 months of abuse and attack.

After several severe beatings the Kajla family was ordered to display two posters, one a photograph of Salman Rushdie with the slogan "Rushdie in, Pakis out" and the other of Enoch Powell with the caption "Enoch says keep the Farm white".

Police accept that incidents were not always handled perfectly but say that resources allocated to the protection of the family were greater than any previously given to a local enquiry with the exception of murder investigations. In spite of convictions eventually being obtained against 12 of 19 people arrested during the affair, police were regularly accused by the SMG during the investigation of failing to take adequate action.

Relations between the police and the SMG came to the boil after Chief Supt Alistair McLean offered the group a meeting, only to receive the puzzling reply: "We are concerned that you do not consider the above case to be serious enough to warrant a meeting."

Last year police launched a three-pronged campaign against racial violence and harassment in Hounslow. A special squad was set up to investigate all reports, with the back-up of senior detectives, when major incidents occurred. A survey was made of the mainly Asian community of shopkeepers, who replied that they had no special concern and there was a leaflet campaign aimed at all households which encouraged people to report incidents.

The result was a 217 per cent increase last year in reported race cases compared to 1988. The statistic appears alarming but police attribute it to their success in encouraging Asians to report abuse.

Throughout the year, 168 cases were reported. Of these, three were of grievous bodily harm, 21 of actual bodily harm, and 18 common assaults, all these categories leading to 22 arrests. There were also 28 cases of criminal damage and 96 "non-crime" incidents of verbal abuse, usually disputes between neighbours of different races which police try to resolve through one-to-one conciliation in the presence of an officer.

Until the end of April this year, police dealt with a further slight increase in reported incidents, including one of grievous bodily harm and eight of actual bodily harm, bringing four arrests.

Renu Gill, a spokeswoman for the SMG, insisted that Mr Sekhon's murder was racially motivated. She said: "Assaults and harassments are countless, but the police do not take proper notice. We have to tell them such-and-such an incident was racial. We should not have to do that."

"We are asking the courts to recognise racial attacks and murder for what they are and police to acknowledge it when an attack is racial. We want to see the courts stepping down on it and recognising racial motives. If the police and courts can make it known that they are clamping down, then hopefully the perpetrators will take notice and think twice before committing attacks like these."

The SMG said yesterday that police claims that the group had made political capital of the murder were "a predictable response". The group said it was unable to confirm or deny that it had been offered meetings by the police but said it would like to speak to them.



Coker: a killer "inflamed by a mixture of drink and drugs"



Eyles: cleared of perverting justice by washing bloodstained clothes

mobilise outside the Old Bailey in solidarity with the Sekhon family in defiance of racial violence and for justice to the victims of racial harassment". Leaflets were distributed outside the court at the start of Coker's trial and the judge delayed the start.

He ordered the leaders of the demonstration to be brought before him and warned them that they were liable to prosecution if they did not desist on the ground that potential jurors could be prejudiced. The demonstration, which attracted supporters from Tottenham, in north London, Leeds, Birmingham, Nottingham, Manchester and Edinburgh, was called off. The demonstration followed

Hundred prisoners may face rioting charges

By RONALD FAUX

AN ARMOURY of makeshift spears, clubs and coshes collected from Strangeways prison, Manchester, after the 25 days of rioting was displayed yesterday by Greater Manchester police.

The debris from the longest siege in the history of the prison service included an imitation rifle, a Molotov cocktail and 40lb of ball bearings in a plastic bowl. Det Chief Supt Arnold Beales, who is heading the enquiry into the riot, said that none of the weapons on display would be used in evidence when trials resulting from the riot begin in about a year.

He said the enquiry, now in its seventeenth week and the biggest criminal investigation carried out by Manchester police, had established that the riot had been planned by about a dozen inmates. He said that more than a hundred prisoners might face charges ranging from murder, conspiracy to murder, grievous bodily harm, rioting, serious criminal damage and arson. A remand prisoner, Derek White, died in hospital after being brought from the prison with head injuries.

Mr Beales said that the injuries inflicted on many people who could be classed as sex offenders was a serious element of the disturbances. These assaults had been an orchestrated operation. The planning and actual start of the riot were also in his view serious aspects of the enquiry, but some of the reports emerging from Strangeways had proved to be grossly distorted or untrue.

There was no evidence of anyone being castrated. Reports of people hanging from, or being thrown from, balconies had proved to be resuscitation dummies being thrown about. Reports of bodies being explained by the fact that some prisoners had taken drug overdoses and had fallen unconscious. "To the onlooker in panic in the middle of a riot these people would look to be dead," Mr Beales said.

The incident centre at Longsight police station, Manchester, reflects the magnitude of the enquiry. More than 80 police officers are sifting and collating statements and evidence and entering them into the computer.

Mr Beales said his officers had travelled hundreds of thousands of miles interviewing the 1,646 prisoners and



Mr Beales showing a mock rifle and other makeshift weapons captured after the Strangeways prison riot. A plastic bowl contained 40lb of ball bearings

500 staff who were in Strangeways when the riot broke out in the chapel on April 1. About 2,500 statements had been taken and fewer than a dozen inmates, released from prison after the riots, had yet to be interviewed.

The investigation is digesting 175 hours of video tape obtained by a court order from television companies and one and a half miles of 35mm film, to produce 111 documentaries about individual prisoners and their activities on the roof of Strangeways. Each film will be shown to the prisoner who

will be invited to identify himself.

"All the ringleaders of the riot have been interviewed. In varying degrees they have co-operated. In some cases it does not matter whether they co-operate or not in view of the amount of evidence we have," Mr Beales said.

Four walls in the incident room are covered with a 50ft mural plotting the relative movements of dozens of prisoners during the first two hours of the riot. The system is known as an Anacapa chart, named after an island off the Californian coast which early

in the morning is shrouded in mist but as the sun rises becomes clearly visible.

● A former Strangeways inmate escaped from temporary prison accommodation yesterday. Edward Bernard Curtis, aged 28, who was serving four years for burglary and criminal damage, is believed to have escaped through the exercise yard of Clifford Street police station in York.

The accommodation at the cells underneath York Magistrates' Court are being used temporarily for prisoners to continue serving their sentences.

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No cash hit list, Arts Council chief says

By SIMON TAIT, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE Arts Council has no hit list of clients ripe for devolution, its secretary general, Anthony Everitt, said yesterday.

After the Arts Council's monthly meeting, at which guidelines for devolving funding for most of its 160 clients to new regional arts boards were the main agenda item, Mr Everitt sought to calm fears that decisions had already been made on which clients were to be delegated and which retained.

"I'm not going to claim that we haven't started thinking seriously about it, but there is no list. No list of any kind is going to be worth anything until it has been fully dis-

cussed with the companies, and that's not going to happen until September," he said.

Responsibility for most arts subsidies will be delegated to the new regional boards under the policy of the previous arts minister, Richard Luce, on which he announced guidelines last week. Broadly, only touring companies with no established base and the five main national companies would remain with the Arts Council under the guidelines, but the boards will be more firmly accountable to the council.

Not until devolution was under way would the Arts Council address its other major task set by the previous

arts minister, that of helping to formulate a national arts strategy to set the arts in Britain on a sound footing by the end of the century.

Mr Everitt revealed, however, that not only clients funded through the Arts Council and regional boards were to be included in the strategy. Museums as well as the Crafts Council and the British Film Institute were also to be part of the process of creating the strategy, which must be in place by April 1992.

The Arts Council will be looking to David Mellor, the new minister, for a higher profile for the arts and firm leadership in steering through

the innovations with adequate funding. By coincidence the council was meeting on Mr Mellor's first day in charge of the Office of Arts and Libraries and interrupted its considerations to welcome him when he paid a surprise visit.

"He did not make any pronouncements about policy, but he assured us of his commitment to the arts and displayed his already considerable knowledge of the subject," Mr Everitt said yesterday. "He's a good advocate - he was trained as one - and the arts needs advocacy. He told us he will be leading from the front."

Leading article, page 13

Ring-fencing will increase rent debts, councils told

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

THE number of council house tenants falling into arrears with their rents will rise sharply because of government action to prevent poll tax income being used to subsidise housing, it was claimed yesterday.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, the professional body for town hall treasurers, said that a sixth of tenants in London were already in arrears and that the introduction of the policy of ring-fencing, which is intended to make local authority housing accounts self-financing, would lead to rent increases and higher levels of rent arrears.

Regulations introduced in April prohibit councils from transferring money to or from their housing revenue accounts from which housing benefit for council tenants as well as the cost of repairs and management are paid.

The institute said that local authorities would be faced with the choice of cutting back on council house repairs to make ends meet, or raising rents. Almost two thirds of the four and a half million council tenants in England and Wales receive housing benefit and rents paid by tenants account for between a quarter and two fifths of the cost of providing council housing.

The latest edition of the institute's local government statistics, covering the financial year to March last year and published yesterday, showed wide regional variations in the level of council rent arrears. Plymouth had the lowest with only 0.5 per cent of rent unpaid at the end of the year.

The north London borough of Brent had the worst problem. Accumulated arrears from previous years meant that a sum equivalent to more than the entire year's rent bill was outstanding in March 1989.

Other authorities with serious rent arrears were Kirkcaldy, West Yorkshire, with 49.6 per cent of rents unpaid, Islington with 30.6 per cent and Waltham Forest with 22.5 per cent. At the opposite end of the scale the charge-capped Barnsley council and Conservative-controlled Bexley were among those with arrears rates of less than three per cent.

A spokesman for the

environment department said that ministers did not accept that ring-fencing would push up rents. The average council rent in England remained £20 a week and the largest increase likely this year was £4.50.

Anyone receiving housing benefit would have the increase met in full, and it was only fair that council housing should be run "as a business" without placing burdens on charge payers. Ministers believed that councils could do more to increase rent collection and the Audit Commission had been asked to issue guidance. The institute's figures also showed that the average cost of educating a primary school pupil ranged from £1,049 in shire counties to £1,198 a year in London. At least three quarters of the cost was in teachers' salaries.

The cost of educating a secondary school pupil for a year was £1,630 in the counties and £1,869 in London. The proportion attributable to teachers' pay was similar, and the institute said that budget cuts would inevitably mean dismissing teachers.

Figures for social services departments showed that it cost almost three times as much to foster a child in inner London (£7,105) as in an English shire county (£2,539).



A couple taking a stroll along the coast are dwarfed by stones for a coastal protection scheme which has started at Staithes, the North Yorkshire fishing village ten miles northwest of Whitby.

The work, which will cost £370,000 and take three months to complete, has been commissioned by Scarborough borough council, with grant aid from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, to improve the sea defences at the

harbour which has a long history of being overwhelmed by the sea.

Michael Clements, the council's director of technical services, said: "One of the main problems is that there is a gap in the harbour's northern breakwater. We want to strengthen it by closing the gap and raising its height." Fifteen thousand tonnes of granite gneiss rock armour are being shipped from Norway to Teesport for the project. Thousand-tonne loads of stone

which arrived in Staithes yesterday were deposited at high tide near the village's two 65 year-old breakwaters. At low tide the stones, some of them weighing 12 tonnes, were moved into position by teams of bulldozers.

Villagers hope that Staithes' distinctive blend of tiny cottages and narrow alleyways which nestle below some of England's highest cliffs will be safe when the scheme is completed, but some have expressed doubts that the scheme will work.

Staithes' lifeboat secretary Mr Clem James said that rocks bigger than those being used had been moved in the past by heavy seas, but Mr Clements said that engineering consultants had given assurances that the stones would withstand storm conditions. "The stones are of sufficient size to ensure it cannot be moved around by heavy seas," he said.

Consultant hours may endanger patients, MPs say

By JILL SHERMAN
SOCIAL SERVICES
CORRESPONDENT

CONSULTANTS might be putting patients at risk by working excessive hours in the National Health Service and the private sector, a Commons public accounts committee report says.

Health authorities need to know the total hours consultants work in both NHS and private hospitals to ensure that they are not overworking, the report says. Doctors on full-time contracts are allowed to earn 18 per cent of their income doing additional private work, but those on maximum part-time contracts can do as much private work as they like provided they carry out certain NHS sessions.

Although there is little evidence of many consultants failing to fulfil their NHS sessions, the committee says that nobody knows how many hours they are working privately. "We consider it unacceptable that the existing controls over National Health Service consultants' contracts, particularly the income control mechanism, are not fully effective," it says. "The [health] department will need to establish effective controls which bring to light any neglect of NHS commitments."

Consultant job plans recently agreed with the profession require doctors to specify only when they are carrying out NHS sessions. Although this is a step in the right direction, the plans, which will operate from April, would require firm management to be effective, the report says.

"Job plans will not give health authorities a view of consultants' total National Health Service and private commitments," the report says. "Health authorities need a more accurate picture of the total level of consultants' commitments to ensure that their responsibility for the treatment of patients are not put in jeopardy through working excessive hours."

The report says that consultants' contracts should be held by district health authorities rather than regions. Under the NHS reforms, the health department intends to devolve negotiation of job plans to unit level. The committee fears, however, that this will not provide local management with the necessary influence.

Duncan Nichol, NHS chief executive, defended consultants yesterday. He said figures from the Office of Manpower Economics showed that consultants worked an average 49 hours a week last year. He said: "The great majority work considerably in excess of their contractual requirements. The job plans introduced will clarify what is expected of a consultant and make it easier for health authorities to monitor the fulfilment of commitments."

The report expressed concern about the lack of information about costs in the private sector. It also criticises the private sector's poor contribution to training medical and nursing staff. "We are concerned at the relatively small contribution made by the independent sector towards pre- and post-registration of nurses. We recommend that the department press the independent sector to increase its contribution to training to reflect its use of National Health Service trained manpower."

Committee of Public Accounts. Twenty-ninth report: *The NHS and Independent Hospitals*. Stationery Office, £7.85

Poll tax rioter jailed for two years for attack on police van

A POLL tax rioter was jailed for two years at Southwark Crown Court in London yesterday for kicking and punching a police van during the Trafalgar Square disturbances. That is the highest sentence to be imposed for crimes arising out of the riot.

Simon O'Reilly, aged 22, formed part of a screaming mob which surrounded the van, driven by a policeman, and attacked it. As he struggled with officers who arrested him other rioters showered police with missiles, the court was told.

Judge Rivlin, QC, told O'Reilly: "The occupants of the vehicle became extremely frightened for their own safety. If the vehicle had been overturned the consequences for the occupants may have

been very serious indeed. This was such a serious incident that you and others minded to behave in this way must appreciate that a substantial sentence of imprisonment, which is intended to be a deterrent, is inevitable."

O'Reilly, a labourer, of Dorset Road, Pimlico, southwest London, was found guilty of violent disorder and criminal damage. The attack occurred in Northumberland Avenue, near Trafalgar Square, after a poll tax protest on March 31. A total of 434 people were arrested and charged with offences arising out of the riots. Twenty-one have been committed to the crown court for trial.

O'Reilly is the first to be found guilty by a jury at a crown court. He is also the

first to be sentenced for the offence of violent disorder. Of those sentenced so far, for offences of affray and criminal damage, jail sentences have ranged between one and three months.

Deborah Little, aged 28, of Coniston Gardens, Scarborough, who claims exemption from the poll tax because she holds a share in a Cornish tin mine, has had her summons for non-payment withdrawn. She was one of 564 people facing the summons.

Mrs Little's husband Neil bought four £1 shares, one each for himself, his wife and their two children. Once the courts have decided how to deal with shareholders in the Cornish tin mine Mr and Mrs Little might face another court hearing.

Conscience cash plea for charity

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS REPORTER

THOSE who benefit from the community charge could give the surplus to housing charities such as Shelter, church leaders said yesterday.

The leaders, from different denominations, gave warning of an increase in homelessness as a result of the charge and said money raised by housing charities "will alleviate the increasing problems facing those on low incomes for whom the poll tax could be the last straw."

The Rev Peter Sutcliffe, a Methodist and chairman of the London Churches Group, an ecumenical forum which represents London church leaders, said: "We have complained from the beginning that the poll tax is not based sufficiently on ability to pay. We have never advocated non-payment of the tax. To people who gain from the poll tax, and have a conscience about it, this will offer a means to channel the surplus."

In a letter to the *Church Times*, the group reiterated its anxiety about the tax. "As a group of church leaders whose areas cover the poorer areas of London we wish to stress again the moral issues. The burden of payment on the poorer areas troubles our consciences and those of many Christians." It added: "The tax is not just, even for those who benefit, while those who can ill afford it have massively increased burdens."

To H, a multi-denominational Christian organisation which aims to transcend barriers and which was founded by an army chaplain behind the front lines of Ypres Salient in the first world war, celebrated its 75th anniversary at Lambeth Palace, London, last night.

The total cost of collecting domestic and business rates under the system which was replaced by the poll tax was £200 million or £3.96 a head. Richard Jones, the environment official in charge of implementing the community charge, said in an interview with the *Chronicle* that the figure of £411 was close to the

Charge collection will cost English councils £411m

By OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

THE cost of collecting the community charge in England will be £411 million this year, according to new government figures.

Based on returns from 300 out of 370 councils in England, the figures show the cost of administering the new tax will range from £3.69 to £55 a head. Some flagship Conservative councils are among those spending most on collection.

The figures have not been published but a copy of the findings has been placed in the Commons library. The environment department has denied that it is trying to hide the true cost of collection.

An analysis of the findings by the *Local Government Chronicle*, published today, shows that the highest administration costs, £55.27 a head, will be borne by charge payers in the London borough of Richmond on Thames.

However, Conservative-controlled Westminster council has spent the highest percentage of its residents' contributions on administering the charge, 23 per cent of each adult's payment, or £45.16, will go towards collection costs. The lowest figure, £3.69 a head, is registered by Labour-controlled South Tyneside.

The total cost of collecting domestic and business rates under the system which was replaced by the poll tax was £200 million or £3.96 a head. Richard Jones, the environment official in charge of implementing the community charge, said in an interview with the *Chronicle* that the figure of £411 was close to the

government's own private estimate that the poll tax would cost £400 million to collect.

He indicated that ministers would consider an administrative cost of £11 a head acceptable and variations of up to 50 per cent would not be unreasonable.

Mr Jones said the government accepted that inner-city areas will spend as much as Westminster. Labour-controlled Birmingham, which has the largest population of any single local authority area, has budgeted to spend £7.26 a head.

The figures produced by Mr Jones's department suggest that not all inner-city areas will spend as much as Westminster. Labour-controlled Birmingham, which has the largest population of any single local authority area, has budgeted to spend £7.26 a head.

According to the journal's analysis, the five authorities spending most collecting the charge are the London boroughs of Richmond (£55.27 or 14 per cent of the payment), Tower Hamlets (£54.50 or 18.3 per cent), Westminster (£45.16 or 23.2 per cent), Kensington and Chelsea (£41.03 or 10.9 per cent) and Brentford and Uxbridge Council, Nottinghamshire, (£35.33 or 9.3 per cent).

The revelations were made only 24 hours after Labour published details of its "Fair Rates" policy which would involve replacing the community charge with a revised form of the old rating system. The proposal seemed to find favour with local politicians of all colours yesterday, although many Conservatives were unwilling to be seen to publicly embrace the Opposition proposal.

'The people's judge' hangs up his wig

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

ONE of the most colourful and down-to-earth characters at the Central Criminal Court, Sir James Miskin QC, "the people's judge", hung up his wig and gown for the last time yesterday.

Sir James, aged 65, is retiring after 15 years in the Central Criminal Court's "hot seat" as Recorder of London where he was popular with juries and where the tough sentences he imposed struck a chord with the general public.

Sir James, often outspoken and controversial on the bench, listened to tributes paid to him yesterday in the famous number one court, packed with fellow judges, lawyers and court officials. Known as "whispering Jim" for his soft delivery, Sir James often brought a smile to the faces of jurors with his down-to-earth approach and use of earthy language. When a barrister carefully suggested that officers at a police station were inebriated, Sir James told the jury: "He means they were having a piss up in the nick."

A keen tennis player, golfer and angler, Sir James was described yesterday by Mr Justice Popplewell as a "fearless advocate, strong judge and delightful companion."

He was a witty after-dinner speaker. His outspokenness on one occasion last year, however, resulted in calls for his resignation when he referred to black people as "nig nogs". The Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, asked for an explanation. Sir James apologized and said it was a "silly expression" that he regretted having used. Sir James has

often criticized a "benevolent" parliament for fixing low maximum sentences, particularly the five-year term for drunken motorists who cause death by reckless driving. Last year he called for the return of capital punishment for premeditated murder.

He became known as a fearless sentence when he jailed the leader of a rape gang for 19 years and imposed a 14-year sentence on a man for sexual abuse of a child. Society, Sir James often

remarked, had "become sick and tired of perverts preying on youngsters" and deterrent sentences had to be imposed to try and halt their "evil" activities.

As well as his judicial duties, Sir James played an important role in the pageantry of the City of London as the court's senior resident judge.

Judge Vowden, who once infuriated Bristol City football fans with an off-the-cuff remark, died yesterday, aged 69. He made the headlines when he told a defendant, accused of receiving stolen goods taken from cars at the football ground car park: "It is bad enough to have to go and watch Bristol City without having things stolen."

The club sent the judge, who was a Swindon Town supporter, two directors' box tickets for the next home game. He accepted.

Desmond Vowden, a clergyman's son, had a distinguished career, serving at the Central Criminal Court before moving to the West Country. He spent 12 years in the Royal Navy, and the Royal Marines, retiring as a major captain in 1950 to become a barrister. After spending 36 years in the legal profession, he retired in 1986 because of ill health.

Judge Granville Wingate, QC, brother of General Orde Wingate who led the Chindit guerrillas in Burma during the second world war, has died at his Sussex home. Judge Wingate, who sat at crown and county courts in the southeast, was 79.



Sir James: often outspoken and controversial on the bench



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by kind permission
of the Chairman



Miss Corbushly found a letter with a George V penny stamp behind her desk. It was an invoice that went missing in 1928 - she remembered it well. The reason it came to light was that everything is being moved about owing to the impending rebuilding works that have been commissioned. As the Chairman quips on an almost hourly basis, "We're adding another

floor but that's another story." Ho Hum. Needless to say the various masons, hewers of wood and other craftspeople require us to give them room so give them room we must. By kind permission of the Chairman therefore, we present our first rebuilding sale for 84 years.

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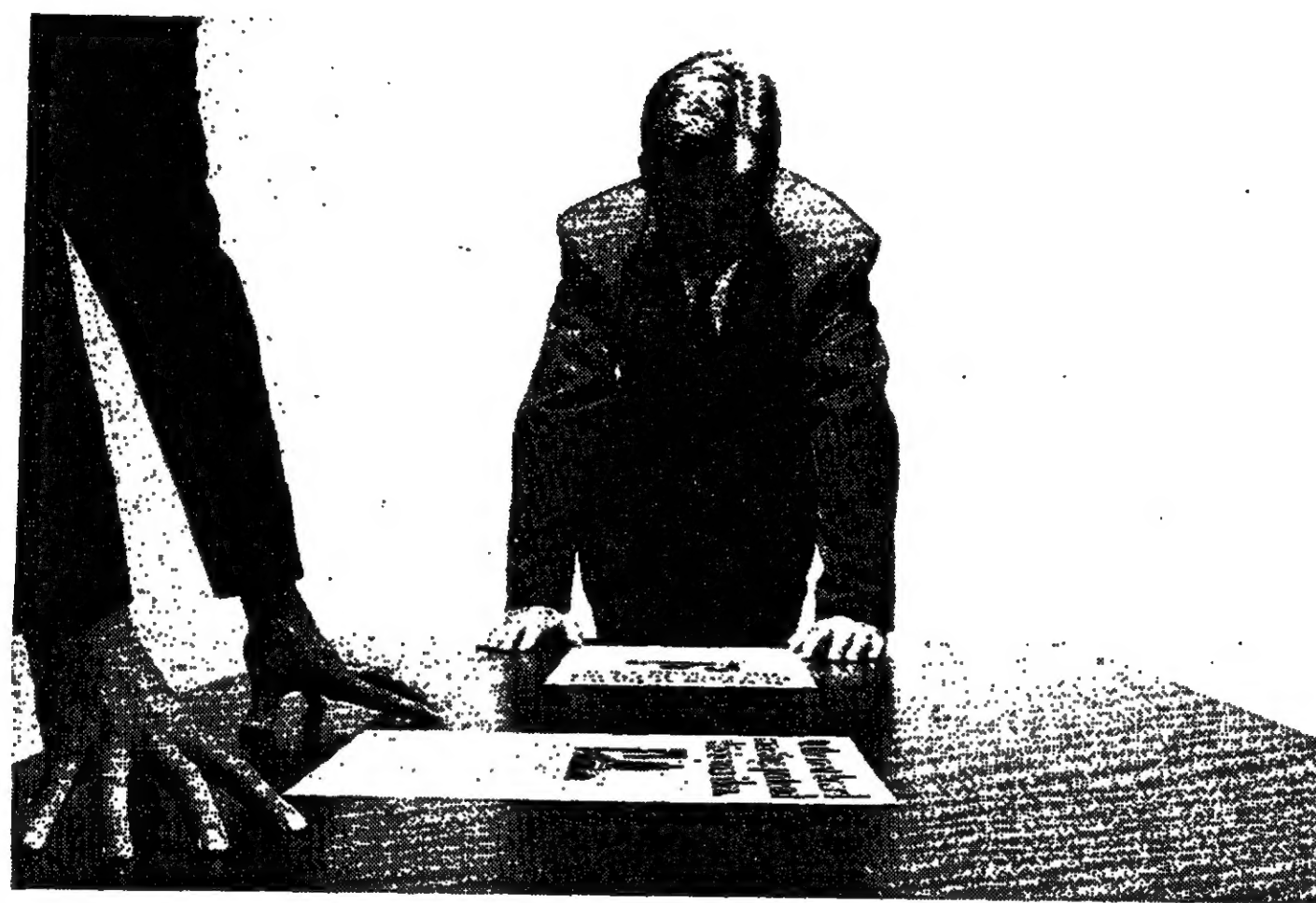
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Sacked ministers likely to get 'redundancy pay'

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

CABINET ministers who are dropped in future reshuffles will collect a tax-free lump sum of nearly £9,000 as severance pay if a bill introduced yesterday goes through the Commons this autumn.

Parliamentary secretaries in the Commons who lost their jobs would collect £4,715, ministers of state, £6,212 and cabinet ministers, £8,780 on the basis of a quarter of their official salaries. There are slightly higher payments for ministers in the Lords whose salaries are higher, reflecting the fact that they have no MP's salary in addition to their pay.

The bill, which would put into practice recommendations made by the review body on top salaries in 1988, will not be made retrospective to cover ministers who lost their jobs in the reshuffle just completed. It will apply only to ministers under the age of 65 not re-appointed within three weeks. Ministers in the Lords who retire or are dismissed already get smaller golden handshakes: the bill will extend the system to the Commons.

Following other recommendations by the top salaries body, the bill provides for the prime minister and the Lord Chancellor to retire on the same terms as the Speaker of the Commons on half pay.

At present the prime minister receives immediately on retirement a pension of fifteen fortieths of final salary, fixed in 1937. The Lord Chancellor is given seventeen fortieths and the Speaker twenty fortieths under arrangements set up in the last century. The bill provides for all three to retire on twenty fortieths of final salary.

As prime minister, Margaret Thatcher is entitled to a salary of £20,851 a year, including her parliamentary salary as an MP, but she draws only the £55,221 to which other cabinet ministers are entitled. So far she has saved the exchequer more than £100,000 by doing so. Her pension will be calculated on the sum she is entitled to rather than on what she draws.

The new Ministerial and Other Offices (Pensions and Salaries) bill also provides a pay boost for ministers in the upper House. It proposes a new right of substantive allowance of £4,672 a year from next April for Lords ministers (except the Lord Chancellor). The Opposition leader and chief whip in the Lords and the chairman and principal deputy chairman of committees. It is estimated that this change will cost about £300,000 in 1990-1.

The government has been under pressure to improve salaries for ministers in the Lords because of the difficulty of finding sufficient people of calibre to work at a salary that compares badly with rewards available outside Parliament.

A separate clause of the bill alters the salary arrangements for the Lord Chancellor. At present, his salary is £91,500 a year. In future, under the bill's provisions, it will be maintained at "£2,000 a year more than the salary for the time being payable to the lord chief justice."

Present salary levels in the Commons are: cabinet ministers, £55,221 a year; ministers of state, £44,951 and parliamentary secretaries, £38,961, in each case including a reduced parliamentary salary of £30,101. In the Lords, cabinet ministers, £44,591, ministers of state, £39,641 and parliamentary secretaries, £33,241.

The Opposition has been consulted about the provisions in the bill, which is expected to be passed rapidly through both Houses of Parliament in the autumn session.

When the bill goes through, separate regulations will provide for an increase in MP's pensions. At present, they get half the pension to which their husbands were entitled. In future, that will be increased to five eighths, back-dated to 1988.



The Speaker, who is entitled to retire on half pay

British banana battle

BRITAIN will try to protect its traditional banana suppliers in the Caribbean after the Single European Act comes into operation in 1992, Lynda Chalker, overseas development minister, said in the Commons.

During a short debate, Mrs Chalker said that the prime minister had written to Jamaica and the Windward Islands assuring them that Britain would fight hard to make sure they continued to enjoy preferential arrangements.

John H. Smith (Vale of Glamorgan, Lab), who opened the debate, said that the end to preferential treatment would be devastating for the Caribbean and for the Barry docks in his own constituency through which the fruit was imported.

German unity 'offers us chance'

THE opening up of East Germany provided an opportunity to British business which should be seized to gain the greatest possible advantage, Tristan Garel-Jones, foreign office minister, told the Commons.

He was replying to a debate that was initiated by Brian Sedgemore (Hackney South and Shoreditch, Lab) with a bitter attack on the prime minister.

Mr Sedgemore said that Adolf Hitler had looked for scapegoats and found the Jews. Enoch Powell looked for scapegoats and found the blacks. "Our prime minister and her advisers looked for scapegoats and found the Germans. Thus does the carousel of history go round in frightening fashion."

History would record that 1990 was the year when "the German question" returned to Britain and a cabinet minister and prime minister had demonstrated that the establishment could be spiteful and vindictive and capable of pursuing a vendetta against an ally, not for decades but for generations.

"Civilised leaders around the globe, from President Bush down, have looked on open-mouthed as Britain has made itself look ridiculous."

Margaret Thatcher was out of tune and out of place in the modern world. While she obviously thought she came to those matters with the unconscious realisation of effortless superiority, they all knew that in fact she was the mad queen.

Guardian not to be punished for leaked paper

By OUR POLITICAL EDITOR

THE Commons privileges committee decided yesterday not to punish *The Guardian* for publishing a leaked memorandum from the public accounts committee over the "sweeteners" paid to British Aerospace for acquiring Rover.

The decision marked a growing recognition that there is little point in the Commons authorities seeking to discipline journalists for reporting what they find, or are given.

The committee noted in its report on the disclosure in *The Guardian* last November of a memorandum from the Comptroller and Auditor General to the accounts committee. "This leak is capable of having serious consequences for the work of the committee. However, it decided not to recommend punitive action, saying: 'We recognise that the House has not been disposed to act against every one of those who have published leaked material, taking the view in 1986 that a journalist should not be punished merely for doing his job'."

That was a reference to a case involving a journalist from *The Times* whom the privileges committee sought to have excluded from the Commons for six months after his disclosure of a draft report from the environment select committee. The committee, whose recommendation was rejected by MPs by 158 votes to 124 on that occasion, has acknowledged that

MPs will no longer sanction such punishments.

On this occasion they considered the disclosure to be more serious, saying that "no classified document has leaked from a select committee before, which sharpens our apprehension at the possible damage to committees done by the leak". But still they sought no sanctions against the journalists concerned, nor against Peter Preston, editor of *The Guardian*.

However, in a clear warning to MPs and others who leak documents, the committee said: "We reserve entirely the right in future to recommend punishment where an offender responsible for a leak has been identified". They urged those on committees to do everything possible to keep confidential unpublished evidence.

As is normally the case in such enquiries, the source of the leak has not been traced despite extensive investigation by the private committee, the National Audit Office, the trade department and BAE.

The Labour MP Tony Benn later released the text of his own minority report, rejected by the privileges committee, in which he called for greater openness with the select committees. He criticised the committee for "huffing and puffing" and failing to follow up vague threats about dealing with breach of privilege.

Second report from the Committee of Privileges, Session 1989-90 (Stationery Office, £6.45).

Caroline rescue fails

HOUSE OF LORDS

AN ELEVENTH hour attempt to rescue Radio Caroline and other pirate radio stations from what were described as draconian, bullying and high-handed measures being taken by the government failed in the Lords.

An amendment moved during the seventh and final day of the committee stage of the Broadcasting bill, to limit the government's action to where Radio Caroline or other pirates interfered with legitimate radio stations, was defeated by 93 votes to 29, a government majority of 64.

The vote came, however, only after criticism of the measures from a succession of peers from all parties and none.

Lord Munnion, who had earlier related how the Dutch authorities and British officials had boarded Radio Caroline last year and smashed equipment, said he did not think any offshore radio station had ever broadcast anything offensive.

The pirate station's material was innocuous and, despite the black propaganda of its enemies, including the Home Office, it did not interfere with emergency and safety services.

Lord McNair (Lib Dem) said that the government's action against Radio Caroline was "wanton vandalism, an example of the lower law mentality in practice."

Earl Ferrers, Home Office minister of state, said that he was surprised by the reaction of peers.

Pirate radio stations were anchoring themselves deliberately outside British territorial waters and transmitting using frequencies allocated to the United Kingdom and preventing their being awarded to others who were prepared to pay for them. They were outside the law and had deliberately put themselves outside the law.

Enforcement powers were needed and what was being proposed was consistent with the United Nations convention that covered interference and reception.

If the frequencies were being used, radio signals could inadvertently interfere with safety services.

Loopholes in the copyright law that allow the format of television shows such as *Opportunity Knocks*, *Mastermind*, and *The Antiques Road Show* to be stolen from the originators and reproduced without payment are to be looked at again by the government.

An attempt to prevent satellite or cable television companies from getting exclusive rights to cover the big national sporting events was rejected by 67 votes to 59 — government majority, 8.

Ivory ban may be rescinded

HOUSE OF LORDS

THE international ban on trade in ivory has been effective in the war against ivory poachers and may be lifted as the African elephant population recedes, David Heathcoat-Amory, junior environment minister, said in a Commons debate.

The price of ivory had fallen so low that elephant poaching was no longer worthwhile and in some areas of Africa had virtually stopped, he said.

The environment department said later that if the ban, signed by more than 90 countries, were lifted, it would be replaced by strict controls.

Child benefit

The cost of raising child benefit to £8.91 to keep it in line with the rise in the retail price index would be about £780 million, Gillian Shephard, under secretary for social security, said in a written reply.

Pension age

The net cost of lowering the pension age for men to 60 would be about £3 billion, Gillian Shephard, under secretary for social security, said in a written reply.

Royal assent

The following acts received royal assent: Appropriation (Finance, Aviation and Maritime Security); Government Trading (British Nationality (Hong Kong); Representation of the People; Marriage (Registration of Buildings); Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland); Contracts (Applicable Law); Haslemere High School; River Tees Barrage and Crossing; Medway Tunnel; Associated British Ports (No 2); City of London (Various Powers); Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (No 2); British Railways; Penance South Pier Extension; Great Yarmouth Port Authority; The Care of Cathedrals Measure also received royal assent.

Recess begins

Both Houses of Parliament rose yesterday for the summer recess. The Commons returns on Monday, October 15. The House of Lords will resume a week earlier when peers will devote much of their time to the report stage of the Environmental Protection bill. The new session will start in mid-November.

Democrats want UN arms register

By OUR POLITICAL EDITOR

A UNITED Nations register of all international arms deals and a UN-administered 1 per cent levy on the arms trade are among the proposals in a Liberal Democrat green paper on sustainable world development to be presented to this year's party conference.

The document, *Shared Earth*, calls for an end to public spending on promoting arms sales and an embargo on arms sales to human rights violators. Sir David Steel, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on foreign affairs, agreed yesterday, however, that until there was an international authority to define those violators, most countries would go on selling arms freely.

The green paper published yesterday calls for the overseas development administration to be recreated as an independent ministry. It also wants Britain to increase development assistance to the level achieved by the UN, of 0.7 per cent of GNP, over five

years and then to 1 per cent over the next five years.

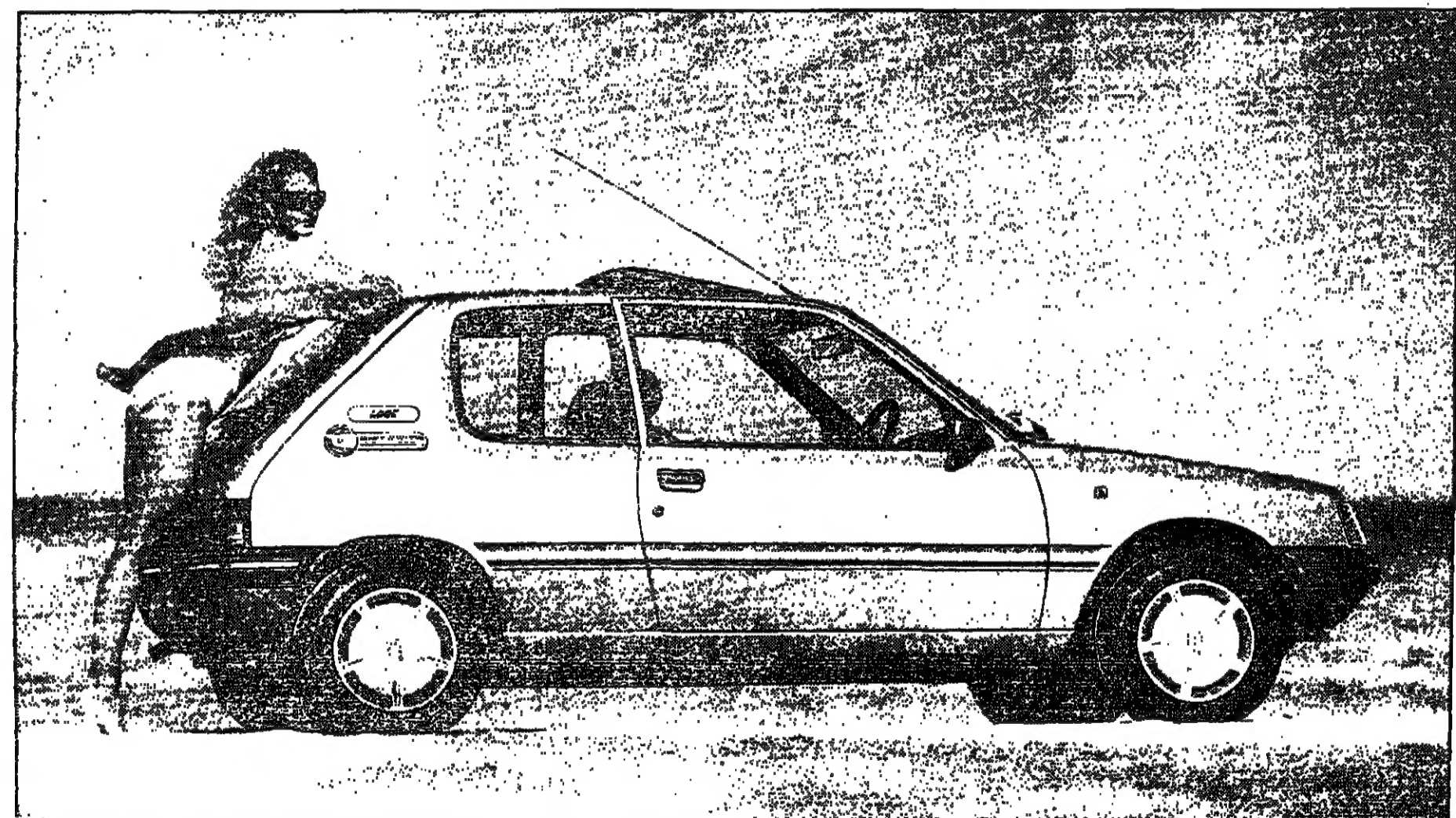
The paper urges that progress in developing countries should be measured not just by gross domestic product but also by the adoption of indicators such as life expectancy, literacy and purchasing power a head.

It calls for the United Nations environment programme to be given the authority, resources and political backing to administer global climate funds and to police a market in "emission ceiling licences" for carbon dioxide and other gases.

The document adds that countries which have fallen into debt should become eligible for IMF and World Bank loans. It calls for further reductions in government-to-government debt and the encouragement of debt-for-environment swaps.

Shared Earth (Liberal Democrat, 4 Cowley St, London SW1P 3NB; £4.55).

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Teacher sacked after girl dies

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Harvest panic grips Soviet Union despite bumper crop

From MARY DEJEVSKY
IN MOSCOW

AS THE Soviet grain harvesting season approaches its peak, Boris Yeltsin, the reforming president of the Russian Federation, yesterday offered special incentives to farmers in an attempt to avert "a catastrophe". His scheme, outlined in an appeal published on the front page of the *Sovetskaya Rossiya* newspaper, will give farmers special cheques, called "Harvest 90", to be redeemed for goods which are in short supply.

Mr Yeltsin's talk of "catastrophe" was the latest in a series of apocalyptic statements from Soviet leaders about this year's harvest, which is said to be one of the best recent years.

The Stavropol area in the northern Caucasus, one of the Russian Federation's main grain-growing areas, has reported the highest yields on record and already completed its contracted deliveries to the state.

This year the difficulty is less with the crop itself than with the harvesting,

storage and delivery of the produce. At the end of last week, the prime minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, spoke of "serious concerns" that the grain was not reaching the state. By July 16, he said, 7.5 million tonnes of grain had been delivered, which was only ten per cent of what was required.

Mr Ryzhkov gave a warning that, because of its shortage of foreign exchange, the state was not in a position to repeat last year's purchases of 44 million tonnes of grain abroad.

Mr Yeltsin's appeal spoke of a "critical situation in food supplies" in the Russian Federation and *Pravda* recently published a front-page article with the doom-laden headline "Will we save the harvest?"

Elsewhere, newspapers have published complaints about the failure of the state to deliver fruit and vegetables to the cities. "It is in the orchards but not in the shops," protested a headline in the government newspaper, *Izvestia*.

A correspondent reported that the apricot trees in Armenia were laden with fruit which was falling off the trees and rotting, while in Moscow the shops were selling hard green strawberries of the real thing.

One explanation for this year's problems is that the Soviet authorities are so unused to having a good harvest that their equipment and facilities, which are stretched even in an average year, cannot cope. But this accounts for only a fraction of this year's difficulties.

There have been serious shortages of fuel in many of the harvesting areas. Even though oil exports to East European countries, in particular Czechoslovakia, have been cut back in an attempt to meet domestic requirements, the adjustment has generally been too late.

A senior official at the government commission on food and procurement was quoted as saying that agriculture had not received 176,000 tonnes of the petrol and 462,000 tonnes of the diesel due in the first half of the year. He said this could translate into 25 million tonnes of grain, or more than 10 per cent of the total, that would not be harvested in time.

Even if the requisite amount of fuel were available, however, it might well not be used. Reports abound of too few lorries, refrigerated trucks and combine harvesters, not to speak of the shortage of spare parts.

The correspondent reporting on the rotting Armenian apricots discovered that the Armenian authorities had hoped to sell fruit in exchange for meat and other food products from other republics. They had even chartered aircraft to fly the fruit to the customers, but contracts had not been concluded in time and the whole project had collapsed. Now the producers were being blamed for a failure which was not of their making, he said.

The Soviet economic reform programme has undergone so many changes that producers, state and party authorities are uncertain how much authority they possess to market, sell or deliver their goods.

A further problem concerns manpower. In previous years, whole sections of the urban population, especially manual workers and students, were

conscripted at short notice to help with the local harvest.

This year the system has broken down. In many places the conscription was organised by the local party committees. This was an unpopular part of their work and they are now using the enhanced power of the elected local government authorities *vis-à-vis* the party as a reason for not doing it. Local governments are not doing it either, partly because they disapprove of the principle and partly because they do not have the influence to organise what was a massive transfer of often unwilling labour.

The new system of enterprise self-financing also means that factories cannot afford to "pay their debt to the countryside" and work with a skeleton staff in the hope of making up lost production later. Now the greater autonomy enjoyed by managers means that many can refuse requests to supply seasonal labour or demand compensation to defray the cost.

Despite the almost doubled state purchase prices for grain this year, farms do not have funds to pay for seasonal

labour at anything like urban rates. Mr Yeltsin's "Harvest 90" cheques are an attempt to give farms and their workers a guaranteed return on their work in the recognition that payment in ordinary roubles, with their negligible purchasing power, will be no incentive.

A further problem has scarcely been mentioned officially. Republics like the Russian Federation, the Ukraine and Kazakhstan, which produce the bulk of Soviet grain, have new nationalist-minded governments with an interest in retaining as much of their produce as possible for their own use.

Mr Ryzhkov's complaint about the relatively small amount of grain delivered to the state suggests that some areas may be withholding grain, either to meet their own needs or with a view to extracting a higher price for it later. That higher price would not be in roubles, but either in a convertible currency or in goods. Such transactions could actually be concluded on a bilateral basis between individual republics, circumventing the state purchasing mechanism altogether and stripping it of much of its power.

Stasi chief charged with harbouring terrorists

From ANNE McELVOY IN EAST BERLIN

ERICH Mielke, East Germany's former state security minister, was arrested yesterday and charged with harbouring terrorists and preparing internment camps for dissidents under the communist regime.

Günter Seidel, the East Berlin state prosecutor, said that the former Stasi chief had been declared fit for trial by an independent commission of doctors. Since his fall from power in October he has been living in a safe house, and was previously declared both physically and mentally unfit to face trial.

Herr Seidel said that he had "concrete evidence" that Herr Mielke, aged 82, had offered leading Red Army Faction terrorists asylum and that he had facilitated changes of identity to protect them from West German justice. "In view of his responsibility for this, and the extra evidence of the planning of isolation camps, we had no choice but to proceed," he said.

Eight Red Army Faction terrorists wanted on kidnap and murder charges have been discovered living under false identities in the East. Three have since been extradited to West Germany. Plans for internment camps intended for political opponents were found in the former minister's files. Work on one near the southern town of Erfurt was

about to begin when the regime fell last autumn.

The arrest of Herr Mielke looks likely to step up pressure for the prosecution of Erich Honecker, the disgraced communist leader, himself. An examination last week deemed him unfit for trial on health grounds, but doctors have ordered a revision in the near future, and Herr Seidel said yesterday his prosecution "was justified by the facts that we now have".

Statements by senior Stasi officers indicate that the two men made the decision to harbour West German terrorists in 1979 because the fugitives reminded them of their own days in the resistance. In private memos to his select "Officers for Special Operations", Herr Mielke said that the use of criminal methods was justified. "These are as nothing compared to the damage to our humane socialism which would ensue if we do not defend it," he said.

Herr Honecker recently denied that he had known of the move. "I am without any guilt and certainly had no knowledge of their presence," he said last week in a statement, adding that Herr Mielke had often taken decisions on internal security without his knowledge.

The perceived incompetence of the East German legal authorities in failing to secure the prosecutions of former leading functionaries has met mounting anger. Initial attempts to charge Herr Honecker, Herr Mielke and Günter Mittag, the hardline economics chief with corruption, abuse of office and treason failed when it emerged there was no adequate provision for a trial in East German law.

Only Herr Tsch, the former trade union boss, was arrested and is still awaiting trial. But the charges against Herr Mielke clearly contravene the East German constitution.

● **BONN:** West German Bundestag members will agree the rules for the first pan-German election in December at a special sitting on August 9 (Ian Murray writes).

Leaders of the West German coalition parties agreed yesterday it was first up to the East German government to put forward its ideas. Lothar de Maizière, the prime minister, is to chair a meeting of experts today to try to work out proposals.

● **HANOVER:** Three Soviet soldiers who defected from East to West Germany last week are entitled to apply for asylum and will not be handed back to Soviet authorities, officials said. (Reuters)

Moscow to speed up withdrawal

Ulan Bator - The Soviet Union is withdrawing its troops from Mongolia faster than scheduled. About 80 per cent of 65,000 Soviet troops have already left, Colonel Dorjotov, the first deputy chief of the Mongolian army general staff, said yesterday. The pull-out is due to be completed by the end of 1991.

Meanwhile, the opposition did better than expected in the first round of Mongolia's general elections, according to results published yesterday. Of the 799 candidates still in contention after the first round, 679 are members of the communist Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party or are independents and 86 are members of the Mongolian Democratic Party. The second round of voting will be held on Sunday. (Reuters, AFP)

Tamil Tigers kill 40 villagers

Colombo - About 40 Sinhalese civilians have been killed by fighters of the Tamil Tigers in attacks on three villages in the Eastern and North Central provinces in the past few days (A Correspondent writes).

Ranjan Wijeratne, the defence minister, said yesterday that 1,000 soldiers were deployed at Elephant Pass in the northern Jaffna peninsula and security forces were firmly established further south in Mankulam and Vavuniya. He said that in these areas, the Tigers were "on the run".

Teacher sacked after girl dies

Tokyo - A Japanese teacher was dismissed yesterday over the death of a girl, aged 15, crushed as the teacher slammed school gates shut.

The incident, in the western city of Kobe, happened after Toshiko Hosoi, aged 39, allegedly closed a metal gate as the student was running into the school with other late pupils. Ryoko Ishida's head was crushed between the gate and a brick wall. (Reuters)



President Waldheim, left, sitting beside Presidents Havel and von Weizsäcker during the opening of the Salzburg Festival yesterday. Before entering the festival hall, their meeting was disrupted by Rabbi Abraham Weiss and Jacob Davidson, below, who were dragged away by police



Jewish activists disrupt Waldheim reception

From BRENDA FOWLER IN SALZBURG

TWO American Jewish activists, shouting "Shame on meeting Nazi Waldheim", interrupted the reception by President Waldheim of Austria of the West German and Czechoslovak presidents at the opening of the Salzburg Festival yesterday.

The protesters, Rabbi Abraham Weiss and Jacob Davidson, of New York City, were dragged away by their collars, taken into custody and released on bail, they said.

They were just a few yards from where Herr Waldheim and his wife were waiting to welcome President Havel of Czechoslovakia and President von Weizsäcker of West Germany, and began shouting seconds before the three leaders were to shake hands.

The ensuing disorder delayed the presidents' initial encounter and guards hustled them off separately into the festival house. Mr Havel and Herr von Weizsäcker were

warmly greeted by Franz Vranitzky, the Austrian chancellor, and Josef Riegler, the vice-chancellor, who were waiting inside the building, and chatted briefly with them.

In his keynote address at the opening of the festival, Mr Havel spoke in terms that clearly applied to Herr Waldheim, who faced international criticism for concealing his wartime activities with the German army in the Balkans.

"The assumption that one can slip through history unpunished, being able to rewrite one's own biography, belongs among the traditional Central European delusions," Mr Havel said in a speech which received loud applause. "If someone attempts to do this, he hurts himself and his fellow citizens, because there is no total freedom, where total freedom is not given free rein."

During the opening ceremony, Herr von Weizsäcker

Defector says Havana needs a miracle

From MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

A SENIOR Cuban economist who defected to the United States last month has predicted that his country's "rapidly deteriorating" economy will be dealt another blow when the Soviet Union cuts aid and begins to trade only in hard currency next year. He also said, in his first news conference since defecting, that President Castro was preparing to put Cuba on a war footing.

Only the "miracle" of a

sharp rise in world sugar prices could rescue the Cuban economy, and "I do not think that will happen", said Ramón González Vargara, former deputy secretary to Comecon.

Cuba was already in "permanent recession", with very low efficiency and productivity, he said. Plans being developed by the Castro regime would force Cubans into the country to work like peasants and introduce strin-

gent measures to deal with fuel and electricity shortages.

Señor González said Cuba was completely dependent on Soviet aid, which he put at between \$5 billion and \$6 billion (£3.3 billion) a year, a quarter of its gross national product. Its total debts were at least \$10 billion, while its annual hard currency earnings were barely \$1 billion.

Señor González, a former employee of Cuba's foreign trade ministry and national

price commission, said he had wanted to defect for up to ten years, but would not go without his family. His chance came when he was posted to Moscow last year. He drove to Berlin in his Soviet-made Lada and just carried on, ending up at the US embassy in Madrid and flying to Miami on July 5.

He is one of a number of prominent Cubans believed to have defected in recent weeks, including senior diplomats.

Though Mr Havel decided to go ahead with the encounter with the Austrian president out of respect for the Austrian nation, his seven-hour visit was orchestrated to limit direct contact with Herr Waldheim. A meeting between Mr Havel and Austrian artists that was scheduled for last night was moved forward so that Mr Havel could avoid spending all afternoon in Salzburg.

Austrian politicians said they were satisfied with the two leaders' presence and applauded Mr Havel's speech, which they said was forthright.

Prague's Red Berets ready to sell their deadly skills

From PETER GREEN IN PRAGUE

IN THE dark days of Czechoslovakia's hardline communist regime, the dreaded Red Beret anti-terrorist commandos operated as frontline troops against pro-democracy protesters, clubbing and arresting peaceful demonstrators.

Now, with the Iron Curtain gone, the Red Berets have their eyes on advanced Western equipment. Their wallets, however, are thin, so they intend to sell their expertise to cash-rich Western clients to raise money for new material. They are experts in explosives, diving, detecting and removing unexploded mines and ordnance, mountain climbing, communications, training police dogs, parachuting and self-defence, most of which are marketable skills.

Referring to Vaclav Klaus, Czechoslovakia's finance minister, Lieutenant-Colonel N, the squad's new commander, said: "For a number of years we have wanted to be self-financing. Now we are

expecting changes in the finance laws so the money we earn won't go to the coffers of Mr Klaus."

Colonel N sees a chance for the Red Berets to cash in on the forthcoming construction of a cellular phone network in Prague by two American telephone companies. "The Red Berets could set up the aerials," he said.

Other skills could also be marketed. The Red Berets are experts in training dogs to sniff out drugs, explosives and people. Dogs once used to sniff railway carriages for stowaways trying to break through the Iron Curtain could now be used to find earthquake or avalanche victims, he said.

Red Beret divers could be used to clear shipping channels of mines, or for underwater demolition work. Major J.N., Colonel N's aide, said: "We could even work as consultants to mountaineering equipment manufacturers." Both men said they were afraid of reprisals if their names were revealed.

Apart from their other marketable skills, the Red Berets think their

biggest money-spinner could be their special skills in scrapping old aircraft. "The destruction of a plane by explosives takes four or five days. The Soviets use saws to make scrap of old airplanes. It takes them, using a team of 20 people, three weeks," Colonel N said.

As proof, he showed a journalist visiting the Red Beret headquarters at Prague's police academy a dossier on the controlled explosion of an old Ilyushin 18 passenger plane in 1984.

Photographs, diagrams and documents which the two commanders said were freshly declassified, show how Red Beret demolition experts divided the aircraft into 91 segments, wrapping belts of Semtex-filled hose around the fuselage to blow the plane to bits, section by section. "We saved a lot of money," Major J.N. said.

Two years later Czechoslovak Airlines asked the Red Berets to dispose of an unflyable Ilyushin IL 62 passenger aircraft.

Western diplomatic and intelligence sources suspect that the two Ilyushins were blown up with

Semtex for more nefarious reasons, perhaps to determine how best to place small explosive charges for maximum effect in an airliner. Colonel N, however, says the destruction of the planes was strictly business. "Our West German friends even offered us DM 100,000 (£34,000) to get rid of one of their planes this way," he said.

Lufthansa, the West German airline, denied it had ever contacted the Red Berets to destroy its old aircraft, and a West German diplomatic source said any contact between a German carrier and the Red Berets would have been highly irregular.

One aviation expert said blowing up aircraft might be cheaper than letting them rot on a disused runway. But how would Western airport security guards react to Czechoslovak policemen with briefcases full of Semtex coming to blow up their airliners?

The Red Berets have ambitious plans to promote their skills. Already they have a rough presentation video, adapted from a visit to

their training camp by a Cuban interior minister. Omnipol, the state-owned foreign trade corporation famous for selling 960 tonnes of Semtex to Libya, is the Red Berets' marketing arm, although no prices have yet been fixed.

● **WARSAW:** The Soviet KGB has come in from the cold in Poland, where it now has an officially registered mission after decades of secret influence on the secret service here, Krzysztof Kozłowski, the new interior minister, said.

The KGB delegation, headed by a general, has the same status as Soviet embassy staff, he said. "If we objected, there would be agents anyway, only we would not know who they are," he told a meeting of Solidarity members of parliament on Wednesday.

The interior minister also revealed that co-operation with the KGB had until very recently "reached deep into the ministry, with standing KGB advisers, consultants and liaison officers installed in various departments and divisions." (Reuters)

Pacific atoll to be US dumping ground

By ANDREW McEWEEN
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

JOHNSTON Atoll, the final destination for the US chemical weapons being shipped from West Germany, might have been any British schoolboy's idea of a desert island fit for Robinson Crusoe. Daniel Defoe's work had been published 88 years before Captain C. J. Johnston, a British mariner, discovered two tiny islands enclosed in a semi-circular coral reef, halfway between the Hawaiian and the Marshall Islands.

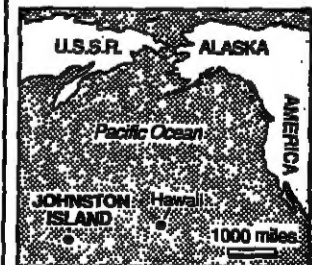
The atoll is so small - only 3,000 ft by 600 ft - it remained unclaimed until 1858. The Americans declared it a bird sanctuary in 1926 and its military potential was not developed until 1941. A naval airfield took up almost the whole length of the island.

After the second world war, Johnston Atoll played an important role in testing and storing American chemical weapons. Some 300,000 artillery shells containing nerve and mustard gas have been kept there since 1971.

However, in 1985 the US Congress passed legislation calling for the destruction of all such weapons by 1997. A high-temperature incinerator, costing \$240 million (£133 million), is under construction and nearly ready for testing. The 100,000 shells in West Germany are to be shipped to the atoll and stored until they can be destroyed in 1992.

The atoll was chosen for its remoteness, being 715 miles from Honolulu. Nevertheless, its new use has dismayed environmental groups and Pacific communities. The Federated States of Micronesia said last week: "Transporting the European stockpile halfway around the world inescapably increases the risks."

The flagship of the Greenpeace environmental group,



Rainbow Warrior, staged a protest last month by sailing around the atoll displaying banners reading "Stop poisonous gas burn" and "What we burn today, we eat tomorrow". Concern has also been expressed in Hawaii. Skip Spaulding, a lawyer for the Sierra Club Legal Defence Fund, an organisation which promotes environmental issues, described the use of the atoll as "a very bad decision based on undue haste". John Wainhe, governor of Hawaii, said last week: "The Pacific must not become the dumping ground for the world's chemical agents and munitions."

The US Army said the operation would have minimal public health, safety and environmental effects. "Safety of people and nations and protection of the environment is foremost in our minds," said John Fairbank, a spokesman for the Army Western Command in Honolulu. Further reservations have been expressed by leaders of the Marshall Islands, Cook Islands, New Zealand and American Samoa.

Sebia Hawkins, the Greenpeace Pacific campaign coordinator, said: "Of course Greenpeace applauds efforts to rid the world of chemical weapons, but incineration is not the answer; more appropriate alternatives must be found. Greenpeace will not sit by and watch Johnston Atoll become a permanent mid-ocean toxic-waste dump in the Pacific." The organisation fears incineration would contaminate the area around the atoll and accumulate in the food chain, threatening all marine species in the area.

Kuwait tries to save face as it gives in to Baghdad

From Juan Carlos Gumucio in Kuwait

DESPITE denying that it had bowed to intimidation, Kuwait yesterday was apparently seeking a face-saving formula to comply with Iraqi demands in their dangerous oil and territorial dispute.

Prospects for a solution to the confrontation that threatened to provoke a new war in the northern Gulf looked promising in advance of the first round of direct talks between the two countries. The talks will begin in Jeddah, the Saudi resort, tomorrow. But Western diplomats in Kuwait said that even if an accord were reached promptly it might be only provisional, given Iraq's long-term political, economic and military designs on its tiny neighbour.

Arab and Western analysts said that Kuwait had been left with no choice but to offer political concessions and an unspecified sum to placate Iraq. Kuwait is expected to accept Baghdad's demands for early bilateral talks to draw up a border demarcation treaty to settle the 30-year dispute over oil-rich territory. There is little doubt in Kuwait that Iraq will use the Jeddah talks to step up its historical claim over the strategic islands of Bubiyan and Warbah, at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab waterway.

Equally indispensable for Iraq during the talks will be the need to obtain solid Kuwaiti promises to observe Opec oil quotas and policies that could eventually raise the price per barrel to \$25

(£13.50), which has been Iraq's objective for some time. The Kuwaitis evidently have been frightened by Iraq's show of force. Sheikh Saad al-Sabah, the crown prince and prime minister of Kuwait, has been vigorously trying to present an eventual settlement as a triumph of diplomatic wisdom, not a reaction to force. "The sons of Kuwait will never, under any condition, give in to threats, extortion and blackmail," he said.

But last night it was not clear how Kuwait would attempt to explain, for example, payment of \$2.4 billion to Iraq for what Baghdad describes as reparations for "oil theft" by Kuwait from the Rumaila field straddling the undefined border in the past decade. Western diplomats suggested, however, that Kuwait could discreetly include that sum in its already scheduled "contribution" to Iraq's reconstruction programme.

Western diplomats in Kuwait, meanwhile, treated with scepticism reports saying that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq has begun to withdraw some units of the estimated 30,000-strong force deployed near the border last week. Arab analysts in Kuwait believe that Iraq is likely to maintain troops in the area to keep Kuwait under pressure.

Perhaps the most visible indication of the success of Egyptian and Saudi Arabian mediation has been the sudden halt in Baghdad's blistering propaganda campaign against Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

On Wednesday night, editors of Iraq's government-controlled press were said to have received strict instructions to stop their attacks on Kuwait, which until two days ago was portrayed in Baghdad's newspapers as an oil thief, an agent of American imperialism and a tool of an Israeli plot to sabotage Arab unity.

The Kuwaiti press which, adhering to the government's prudent line, had not mentioned the big Iraqi build-up, yesterday went so far as to deny an Iraqi troop build-up and was full of praise for President Mubarak of Egypt and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.

Employing a particularly conciliatory tone, the *al-Qabas* newspaper, referring to the eight-year Gulf war between Iraq and Iran, said: "We acknowledge that the heavy burden weighing Iraq down is above its means. This burden is also above the means of Kuwait." It said recent Iraqi military movements were routine and that what the foreign media called an Iraqi troop build-up in the (southeastern) Basra region was caused by the fact that Iraq is still in a state of war with Iran.

Another Kuwaiti daily, *al-Watan*, said the talks, along with the ending of the Iraqi press attacks, was a step towards settling all differences in a brotherly and reasonable spirit "and removes from our region the spectre of foreign intervention".

Iraqi newspapers, themselves, after more than a week of anti-Kuwait comment, yesterday carried no criticism of the emirate, giving substance to Mr Mubarak's statement that the press campaign and war of words between the two countries would come to an end yesterday.

Leading article, page 13

Gulf mediator Mubarak feels the pinch as Cairo debt burden soars

From Christopher Walker in Cairo

THE success of President Mubarak of Egypt in defusing the Gulf crisis, the latest in a string of diplomatic triumphs, has highlighted the contrast between his country's external influence and its dire domestic circumstances, which have brought it close to economic collapse.

Foreign debt is around \$50 billion (£27.6 billion), more than four times its size during President Sadat's era, the budget deficit is at least 8 per cent of gross domestic product, and banks have refused to lend the government new funds.

To add to the troubles which are causing serious concern among Egypt's Western friends, who regard its stability as crucial to Middle East peace, the most populous Arab nation now faces an aid cut-off from its two most important donors, the United States and France. "We have been hearing for 20 years that Egypt had reached the end of

its rope, but something always came along to save it," said an Egyptian economist. "This time I cannot see anything coming along."

A long-running series of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund is continuing, with no hope of a rescheduling of the country's debts. "We have been moving in a vicious circle for more than three years," said an IMF source, anticipating the departure of an Egyptian delegation to Washington for more talks.

The key to the disagreement, which led the normally temperate Mr Mubarak to label the IMF a "quack doctor", is the speed with which Cairo is prepared to cut its budget deficit and reduce the subsidies on basic items that are a barrier to economic reform. The president is haunted by the memory of the 1977 bread riots which nearly toppled his predecessor, and insists any change must be

gradual in order to avoid the prospect of more street unrest. "We want reform," he said earlier in the unseasonably haggard over terms. "But I tell the IMF that this reform must be in line with our social and economic situation and the standard of living."

In recent months, the prices of many essentials have risen between 40 and 100 per cent. In an attempt to exploit national euphoria resulting from Egypt's better than expected showing in the World Cup, the price of sugar and electricity both jumped by 60 per cent during the competition with no public announcement.

But the IMF, mindful of the rapid collapse of the last agreement in 1987, has not been sufficiently impressed. One of its reports on Egypt's parlous economic state said: "Delaying adjustment might very well be more costly subsequently in economic and

social terms as it could necessitate even stronger and less socially acceptable actions."

Mr Mubarak, who has steered Egypt back to a position of influence in the Arab world after ten years' isolation caused by its peace treaty with Israel, is hopeful that his diplomatic successes will pay economic dividends. But so far there has been little sign of that. Western economists believe that the crunch could come in the next few months when Egypt must make a series of heavy payments on its military and economic debt to Washington or risk being cut off from \$2.3 billion a year in American aid.

Under the congressional Brook Amendment, fresh aid is suspended to countries that fall more than a year behind on debt repayments. According to diplomats, Egypt is due to pay more than \$140 million in September for an instalment was due a year ago.

France, Egypt's second biggest creditor, has also threatened to cut off aid if debt repayments of between \$150 million and \$200 million are not paid soon. The impending cut comes despite a close friendship between Mr Mubarak and President Mitterrand, a frequent visitor to the banks of the Nile.

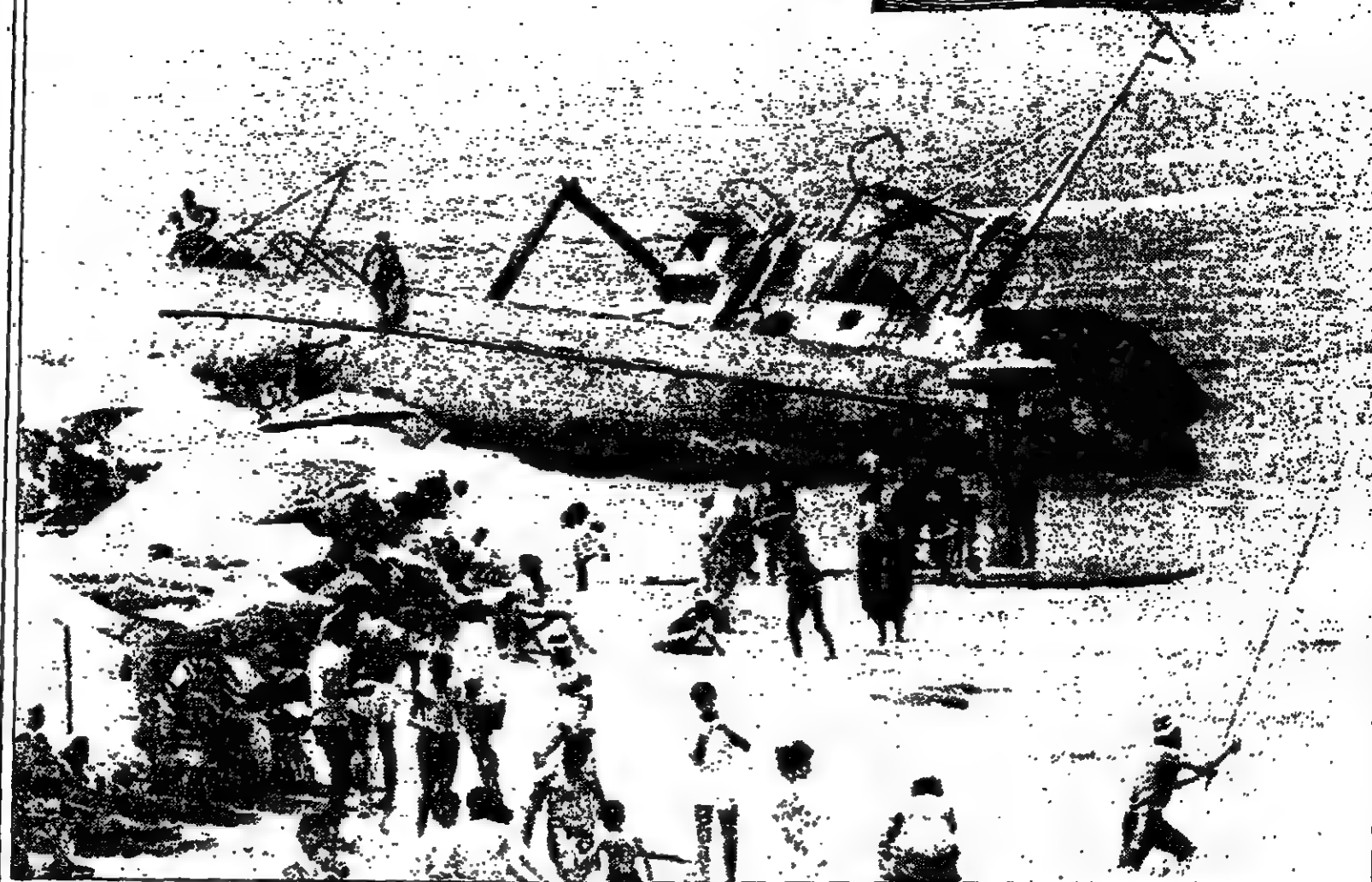
In addition to economic headaches, exacerbated by one of the most stifling bureaucracies in the world, President Mubarak, aged 61, also faces a rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism. There are often clashes between activists and the security forces.

Egypt is ruled under emergency laws reviled by an opposition which, though permitted one of the freest presses in the Arab world, makes little political impact against the might of the ruling National Democratic Party.

Government officials maintain that, after a recent court ruling declaring the 1987 polls unconstitutional, a general election will have to be staged soon. As in Algeria and Jordan, a strong showing by Islamic hardliners is expected. Mr Mubarak, repeatedly criticised by human rights activists, has yet to display the same dexterity at home as he has done abroad.

Both prime ministers, Kang Young Hoon of South Korea and Yoon Hoon of North Korea, are ceremonial figureheads. But their meeting is seen as symbolically important. The talks are scheduled in Seoul from September 4 to 7 and in Pyongyang from October 16 to 19.

هكزامن النحل



Keeling over: the Egyptian economy, like this ship aground on a Mediterranean holiday beach in Alexandria, is on the verge of collapse

Release of detainees is price of EC loans to China

From Catherine Sampson in Beijing

FRANCIS Maude, the outgoing foreign office minister, told China yesterday that it must release more people detained after the Tiananmen Square massacre if it wanted to persuade the European Community to resume soft loans. Observers believe China will soon announce that more detainees have been released to secure the loans.

Mr Maude ended his Peking visit by handing to his Chinese hosts an Amnesty International list of more than 600 detainees. In effect writing a price tag for the resumption of soft loans, he made it clear that more releases were needed before the EC would ease sanctions against China.

Britain, which is confined by the EC ban, believes China has already done enough by lifting martial law in Peking and Tibet, releasing some detainees and allowing Fang Lixi, the dissident astrophysicist, to go abroad, but France, Denmark and The Netherlands are still pressing for more releases.

Mr Maude could make only half-hearted claims for movement on Hong Kong, the main item in his talks with Chinese officials, on his return. "But what I think we have been able to do is generate a constructive atmosphere in which to manage and resolve the problems between us," he said.

He described as "progress" Peking's "relatively muted" criticism of British legislation to grant passports to 250,000 Hong Kong citizens and of the Hong Kong bill of rights.

British sources said Mr Maude confirmed his concern about human rights abuses in China to the release of detainees. A Western diplomat yesterday said: "I would have hoped that he would have linked the requirements for a resumption of soft loans to a whole range of human rights abuses and to economic reform and even to commercial realism."

China has already announced the freeing of 881 people arrested for their involvement in last year's anti-government protests. However, only about a dozen have been named, and there is no way to verify the figures.

The few who are known to have been released live in fear of re-arrest. They have not been tried or declared innocent, but told by the authorities they have been freed as a gesture of goodwill and must stay silent. Observers believe that while some prominent intellectuals may have been released because they are known abroad, many ordinary office and factory workers are still in detention.

China's ruthless suppression of freedom of speech has not softened since the massacre. Fledgling political and economic reforms have stagnated.

● TOKYO: Toshiki Kaifu, the Japanese Prime Minister, yesterday urged industrialised nations to restore relations with China more than one year after the Tiananmen Square massacre.

"Isolating China from the rest of the world and putting a brake on China's move towards democracy would not have any positive effect on peace and stability, not only for Asia, but also for the world," Mr Kaifu told business leaders.

He said the policies of the industrialised democracies towards China would further isolate China and hamper Chinese efforts for democratic reform. (AP)

Australian fathers get year's leave

Melbourne — Australian fathers won the right yesterday to take up to one year's unpaid paternity leave after the birth of a child. In a landmark decision, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission recognised that the nature of modern parenthood had changed and that mothers were no longer sole providers of infant care.

But the Australian Council of Trade Unions failed in its attempt to secure the right for new parents to take a year's unpaid leave together. The commission decided that a new-born child's parents should be allowed to share parental leave of 52 weeks.

Women were granted up to a year's maternity leave in 1979 and employers required to give them back their old jobs when they returned to the work. The executive director of the New South Wales Employers' Federation, Garry Brack, said he did not expect many men to take advantage of the new provision in the short term. (AFP)

Kidnap murder

Buenos Aires — The son of an influential Peronist trade union leader and friend of President Menem has been found murdered in the Argentine seaside resort of Mar del Plata, 19 days after he was kidnapped. According to the interior minister, Julio Mera Figueroa, the police found Guillermo Ibanez's body with a bullet hole in the back of his head on Wednesday. (Reuters)

Island reforms

Praia — Aristides Pereira, president of Cape Verde Islands, opened an extraordinary congress of the ruling PAICV party here yesterday and announced that he was stepping down as party leader as a first step towards ending 15 years of one-party rule. It was a milestone in the party's history, he said. (AFP)

Nairobi arrest

Nairobi — A Kenyan opposition lawyer and journalist, freed on Wednesday after three weeks in detention, was re-arrested immediately after his release. His office said yesterday, Gitobu Imanyara is the editor of the Nairobi *Law Monthly*, which has criticised the government for infringing the independence of the judiciary. (AFP)

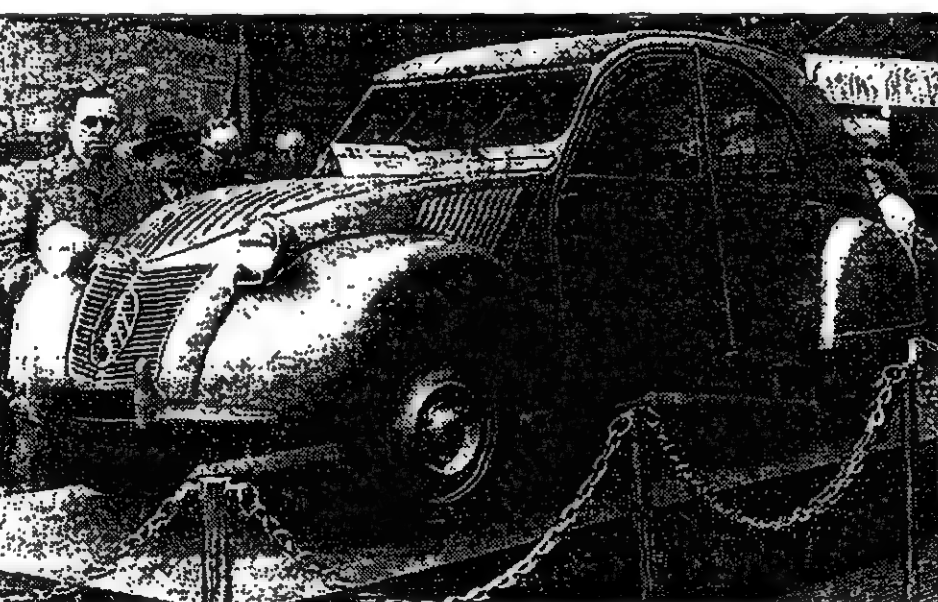
Cult group held

Mexico City — Police in the Durango state of Mexico have arrested 14 people accused of belonging to a Satanic cult suspected of carrying out more than 30 human sacrifices over seven years. (Reuters)

Green victory

Oslo — Norway has cancelled an expulsion order against the Beluga, a Greenpeace research vessel, after deciding that local police had over-reacted to a protest at a paper mill. "We've been allowed to continue our trip," said Paul Bugge, a spokesman for Greenpeace on board the vessel. (Reuters)

End of the road for the 2CV



Production of the basic Citroën 2CV Dax, Chevaux car — admirers at the Paris motor show in 1948, above, saw this early model — ceases in Portugal today, 41 years after the first of the 7,000,000 production lurched onto the road (AFP reports).

The original design specification was for a car that could carry two people and 50 kilos (120 lb) of potatoes at 38 mph on three

litres (two-thirds of a gallon) of petrol per 100 kilometres (62.5 miles). The first models in 1949 had an unfurling fabric roof to accommodate top hats, and came in one colour — grey. A leading attraction was the car's suspension, which allowed it to bounce across uneven ground.

The last model will be kept as a museum piece by Citroën.

NEW YORK NOTEBOOK by Charles Bremner

Race and sexual politics take centre-stage on Broadway

Broadway is in a flap again over the casting of a British two years ago Sarah Brightman ran into trouble when local actors objected to her playing in the Broadway *Phantom of the Opera*. This time the fuss surrounds Jonathan Pryce, the leading man of *Miss Saigon* in London.

Although the show is not due to open on Broadway until March, such is the reputation of British musicals these days that bookings worth \$24 million (£13.3 million) have already been made. Cameron Mackintosh, the producer, wants Pryce to play the part which earned him an Olivier award for best actor. However, a group of influential Asian-Americans, led by David Henry Hwang, who wrote *M. Butterfly*, are demanding that the role of the half-French, half-Vietnamese engineer go to an Asian or Eurasian and not to a Caucasian.

Equity condemned the choice on Tuesday as "especially insensitive and an affront to the Asian community" and threatened to bar Pryce from the part. Mackintosh has responded with a threat to cancel the show unless

Equity changes its mind within two weeks, a gesture which one Asian Equity spokesman dismissed as "a lot of hot air".

Mackintosh says he made a "gigantic attempt" to find an Asian who suited the role and he puts the affair down to hypocrisy. This year, he notes, his team replaced Michael Crawford in the Los Angeles *Phantom* production with Robert Guillaume, a black



Pryce: casting has been condemned by Equity

actor, and anyway, Broadway's most famous Asian role was the king of *The King and I*, played by Yul Brynner, a Russian-German-Swiss.

Another Broadway cliff-hanger was settled this week. This concerns the virgins of the New York City Opera company and whether they should cover their nakedness.

The four maidens are due to appear in Schoenberg's unfinished masterpiece *Moses und Aron*, which opens in September. Their fate came into question after an official at the company wrote a memo suggesting that the undressed women might upset the National Endowment for the Arts, the government-funded body which is under intense fire from Senator Jesse Helms and other conservative politicians for giving tax money to works containing sexual themes.

With its future in the balance, the NEA reluctantly told recipients of grants this month that their money could be withdrawn if anything in their works were deemed obscene. However, Christopher Keene, the director

of the New York company, has decreed that, Senator Helms notwithstanding, the show will go on with the virgins, who are sacrificed to a golden calf almost as soon as they appear.

It is not surprising that theatres and restaurants are such big business in New York, at least according to a poll by a newspaper this week.

The New York Observer found that 68 per cent of citizens of the Big Apple would rather see a Broadway show than have sex and 72 per cent would rather go to a restaurant than to bed. Another figure confirms the suspicions of the rest of the country that New York is an truly odd place: given a choice between sex and seeing a baseball game, the New Yorker opts for sex.

Times are getting hard for that emerging US minority, the heterosexual or straight, white American male (swam). After years of assertive politics by women, racial minorities, the "challenged" (handicapped) and homosexuals, the ordinary white American guy

now finds himself on the defensive, obliged to apologise for the sins of society, if not all mankind.

Ellen Goodman, an influential columnist, made a revealing joke the other day when talking about laboratory experiments. Some people, she said, think the term "white male rat" is redundant.

Of course Anglo-straighties, as "swams" are also known, do run the White House and most of the federal government, but that is not enough to stop "swams" suffering from low self-esteem, particularly in places such as New York, where they are definitely in the minority. Men's liberation groups have been springing up to raise consciousness and make them "love themselves more", as people say, but they have stirred little fervour — probably because any "swam" would rather spend the evening in his garden or watching baseball.

This week saw the release of a book which might convince the "vanillas" — as the advertising world labels them — to stand up and fight. In *Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol Adams spends 250 pages explaining that meat-eating goes with the domineering macho

mentality because the oppression of women is the same as the oppression of animals. The instinct that makes men go hunting is not far removed from the one that makes them want to beat their wives, she says. Her point is that vegetarianism is the only hope for women and others who would not be dominated by "swams".

If you booked a ticket to *Miss Saigon* and the show is cancelled, you might just be able to make a case for America's latest legal fad: suing for emotional distress. More and more suits are appearing from citizens claiming to have had their "mental tranquility" disturbed by events that did not in themselves result in any damages.

In the most publicised case, 25 passengers from an Eastern Airlines flight are seeking tens of millions of dollars for the anxiety they suffered when their pilot announced an engine failure in flight. The plane returned to land uneventfully on two engines. The Supreme Court is now deliberating what the lawyers define as a "fear of the future" action.

The reticence that roared

Philip Howard

Nicholas Ridley blew out of the water another national myth — the one about English understatement. For this century at least we have prided ourselves that reticence was the supreme virtue of the upper and middle-class Englishman. He never got excited, he kept a stiff upper lip (and a loose lower jaw) at all times, and he always said fathoms less than he meant. His most enthusiastic commendations were "rather" and "not half bad", taught him at public school, where it was a sign of weakness to show emotion. He described a disaster as "rather a nuisance", and if he said, "I don't like that woman", she should remove herself at once, and consider emigrating. When his Treasury team resigned, he described it as a little local difficulty. Even the maid announcing the sinking of the Titanic put it mildly: "I'm afraid there's been a boating accident."

Foreigners never believed in this strong, silent stereotype for a moment. They have met our tourists and seen our tabloid press. They know that the national characteristics of English speech are hyperbole, obscenity, bigotry and repetition. O was some Pow'r the giftie gie us! To see ourselves as others see us. In his observations about our German allies, Nicholas Ridley demonstrated the Englishman of the new age: outspoken, downright rude, and imperatively over-the-top, dragging in Adolf Hitler to lend a touch of sophistication to his argument.

This legendary English understatement is connected with our embarrassment about showing emotion. And this arises from our dislike of children. The earliest travellers to England commented on the national practice of preferring dogs and horses to children, who were sent away as soon as possible, to learn manners at school, where they could be inculcated with the virtues of cold baths, Christianity, cricket, and lioties. The girls were farmed out as soon as decently possible, into matrimony, or, failing that, as governesses and teachers, preferably somewhere a long way away, like Belgium. We pride ourselves on the economy of our body language, and on conveying our meanings by nuance and indirection. Not any more, it seems. We are supposed to hate fuss. As one of us observed: "The English find ill-health not only interesting but respectable, and often experience death in the effort to avoid embarrassment." She must have been talking about a previous generation. Ours goes out of its way to create embarrassment. You have only to watch the behaviour of our drivers in traffic jams, our travellers on public transport, our drinkers in the pub, to recognise that the strong, silent, reserved Englishman is extinct.

In the legend, politeness and euphemism were the makers of

English discourse. Tell that to the Ridleys. Grammarians describe the supposed English understatement as meiosis, which is Greek for lessening. You can commit meiosis by substituting a woolly phrase for a sharp one (community charge instead of poll tax), by euphemism ("he's had a drop" means "he's pissed out of his mind"), and "your German friends" means "bloody Krauts"; and by frequent use of the wimpy modifiers "somewhat", "rather" and "to a certain extent". ("I'm quite cross" = "I am in a blinding rage; watch out" and "with the greatest respect" = "I am going to break the neck off this bottle and ream your bottom").

The other peculiarity of English type of meiosis is lioties, the not-universal Greek rhetorical term means fragility, and it is a not unuseful trick in writing. There are occasions when "not unkindly" conveys your meaning more exactly than "kindly". When Paul writes to the Corinthians, "I praise you not" (he is on about women wearing hats in church) his lioties has the effect of an emphatic, "I disapprove vehemently". "No mean city" applied to Glasgow means, "we are the greatest". "Not bad" means "bloody good". But lioties can become an irritating trick, exemplifying the worst of mandarin, Wykehamist prose, to show off rather than convey plain meaning to the peasants.

When the lawyer clears his throat, and says, "This is a by no means uncomplicated case," we understand him to mean: "There are only a dozen people in the United Kingdom who are meant to understand this, and you are not one of them." "Less than truthful" is a euphemism for lying, and "economical with the truth" is another weasel evasion. If somebody arrives with a reference saying he or she is "not untalented", we are not swept away with enthusiasm. "What kind of pretentious prat wrote that?" we growl. George Orwell recommended that we should inoculate ourselves against the lioties disease by memorising the sentence: "A not unblack dog was chasing a not unusual rabbit across a not ungreen field." Orwell was an Englishman who did not suffer from the English vices of hypocrisy, evasion and understatement.

Nicholas Ridley should have reached in his vocabulary for his lioties and euphemism when he sounded off. It is perfectly possible to convey the kind of Little Englander bigotry he had in mind without blunt precision. We should all have known exactly what he meant. In fact, history suggests that the English were blunt, hyperbolic, and foul-mouthed. Not for nothing were we known by the French as "God-dams". Victorian prudery and class anxiety made us mealy-mouthed. It looks as though we are reverting to race.

...and moreover

HENRY STANHOPE

Our fridge-freezer has irretrievably broken down. Fifteen years ago we didn't have a freezer. Thirty years ago we managed without a fridge. We are now totally dependent upon both. No ice, no frozen food; warm beer; runny butter and stale milk... life is hell.

We are sustained by memories of the past. At least we know what life was like before. My grandmother-in-law, for instance, could remember what life was like before we had anything. I used to think tomatoes, along with apples, grew in Eden. But she could recall the first delivery from Spain coming to the Gloucestershire village where she lived. She could clearly remember life without a lot of things, like aircraft, cinemas, cars and combine harvesters. When these broke down her equanimity was daunted.

Sir Walter Raleigh's mother must have known the world without potatoes. "Well, wouldn't it be Wally," she used to say, "but personally, I don't like this foreign food. Of course it's all right for the young..."

We are creatures of the times that we recall. I can remember life before salad bread, the Costa del Sol and television. It follows that I recall television when it started: Gilbert Harding, the TV Toppers, and includes that commonly surpassed the programmes in between. No one who saw the Cup Final in 1950. Arsenal and Liverpool playing in grainy black and white, would complain about any sports programmes today.

I was reared in the age of steam and village stations. No high-speed diesel loco can match the romanticism of those days. The sight of a clanking, hissing "Castle" class thundering into Shrewsbury station, the windows of its coaches dripping with rain, conveyed a very real sense of travel.

On the other hand one travelled fairly hopelessly. It took a damned long time and tested our island nation's stoicism. One sat, knees interlocked, on moquette seats, staring at sepia prints of Weston-super-Mare, as the train limped from village halt to village halt. When passengers now protest about dirty trains, or those that turn

up 15 minutes late, one nods in more tolerant understanding.

Most of all I can recall life without hygiene, or at least when its influence was less pervasive. I can remember when we all swam in the Severn without fear of coming out in spots, and when biscuits were sold in open paper bags, not plastic packs requiring the SAS to force an entry. The grocer weighed them out from large tins, charging half price for the broken bits at the bottom.

We had a local grocer when I was small who kept an ever-growing family of grey cats. I don't think he actually bred them — they did well enough on their own — though he bore a remarkable resemblance to them, being small, plump and grey with white whiskers. The main distinction lay in our grocer's tribly hat, which he wore throughout the seasons and in bed.

Nor did he, like the cats, lie on the counter. They sprawled there, licking their chops and purring softly, their tails swishing dangerously near the bacon slicer or fanning the large blocks of cheddar cheese. They were not the only fauna in the shop. From the central light there hung a yellow flypaper, slowly turning in the dusty draught from the open door, the day's kill, wings fluttering feebly, adhering to it.

I can just recall when the milk came in churns, brought round by a local farmer in his cart. He dispensed the foaming liquid in a measuring jug while his sheep dog leapt up and down and chased its tail. In those days the milk went off within two days or settled on top of one's tea in small white flecks. This was often a sign of "thunder in the air".

But I cannot remember anyone falling ill. Salmonella was something in tins, one bought for tea, and listeria a rare kind of poled plant. Our antibodies saw them off on our behalf.

It is with such remembrance of times past that we are now coping with our temporary privations. White spots on our tea? Piffle! Lukewarm gin and tonic? Pshaw! Butter dripping in sympathy with the Double Gloucester? So what! Fings are simply what they used to be *chez nous*.

Conor Cruise O'Brien writes, from personal experience, about legal buffers needed when groups collide

Justice falls at the ethnic barricades

The phrase "any black will do" is often to be heard on the lips of American blacks these days, especially those in New York. It has to do, primarily, with the trial of three black 16-year-olds for having taken part in the "wilding" attack on a Central Park jogger, involving gang-rape and attempted murder.

Many blacks believe that those on trial were picked up at random, and had confessions forced out of them. I would prefer not to believe that, especially as some of the black activists who make the claim are obviously an ugly lot, who make vicious, preposterous charges against a victim who will always bear the scars of that hideous hunting-down. I cannot, however, say that an "any black will do" operation is out of the question, because I personally have witnessed an attempt at such an operation, by a unit of the New York police 25 years ago.

I had been attending a conference at Columbia University. It was a pleasant late-September day, and during the lunch-break I took my work out to read in nearby Morningside Park. There seemed to be nobody round. Then I heard running feet. Two young men

seized me from behind. In front, two frisked me, and took my wallet and watch. They made off without hurting me in any way. It was a routine New York mugging of the mild sort. All the muggers were black, which is also routine. They were in their mid-teens.

If that were all, the story would not be worth telling here, but the sequel makes it relevant. I rang the police to report the theft, hoping to recover my watch. A patrol-car soon turned up with two policemen. The driver was silent. The other said: "Let's go find them."

We drove into a crowded street in nearby Harlem. The policeman started pointing at male teenagers and asking: "Is it that one? Is it that one?" After I had said "no" for the fifth or sixth time, the policeman turned nasty, and started to insinuate that I was a paedophile on the prowl, and that the kid who stole my watch was probably eight years old, or less.

The trip with the police was much more unpleasant than the episode with the muggers. But the most chilling aspect of that side-walk identification parade was that this was obviously a routine procedure, with which citizens were confidently expected to co-

operate. Young black males, collectively, were seen as a criminal community. It did not matter which particular member of that community was jailed for which particular offence. Any black would do.

Actions of a not dissimilar nature are known in this country. In the Guildford Four and the Maguire cases — and probably in the Birmingham Six case — the local police seem to have acted on the principle, "any Mick will do".

One could formulate a law governing inter-ethnic justice: "When members of ethnic group A habitually commit offences against members of ethnic group B, members of ethnic group B will ensure that if the actual perpetrators of a particular offence are not available for punishment, some other members of group A shall be punished in their place."

Of course this does not come about as a result of any conscious decision by the leadership of ethnic group B. It is a result of angry public demand among ethnic group B that the perpetrators of offences against them should be punished. Members of ethnic group B do not know who the actual perpetrators of a given

offence are, but they know that they are members of group A. If — as must often be the case — this is all that the police know, then the police are liable to relieve the pressure on themselves by seeking to convict members of group A at random. The courts, drawn from group B, will want to believe that the police have got the right people. The courts will not consciously think that "any black will do" or "any Mick will do", but they are typical of their group.

I do not find it in the least surprising that the wrong people should have been convicted of the Guildford bombings (and possibly the Birmingham bombings) if the right people could not be found. Nor would it be surprising if the wrong people were convicted in the wake of the Central Park attack. Such atrocities, of their nature, generate community outrage, and the outrage makes itself felt in legal proceedings, through the processes I have described. ("Any black will do" as a matter of routine is another thing, and part of the peculiar social pathology of New York City.)

It could be argued — though it would be a daring argument — that

wrongful convictions after some inter-ethnic atrocity for which the guilty parties cannot be found have a positive social function. The argument would be that the convictions, even if wrongful, work to avert collective reprisals and even lynchings (which are a possibility in the New York case).

However that may be, it is clear that there is a special case for early review of convictions in the case of atrocities with an inter-ethnic aspect. The disquieting thing about the Guildford case is not the original wrongful conviction — which may be ascribed to human refusal to believe in even the possibility that there might have been a wrongful conviction in the emotional atmosphere that prevailed after the bombings.

British justice, we were given to understand, is acent-deaf as well as colour-blind; but it is an intrinsic part of human behaviour — and even British justice is administered by humans — to perceive and be affected by ethnic signals. Best to accept that, and allow for an early review in such cases. With the Birmingham Six in mind, I would make that an "early and speedy" review.

In place of skulduggery: the reforms that can lift Labour

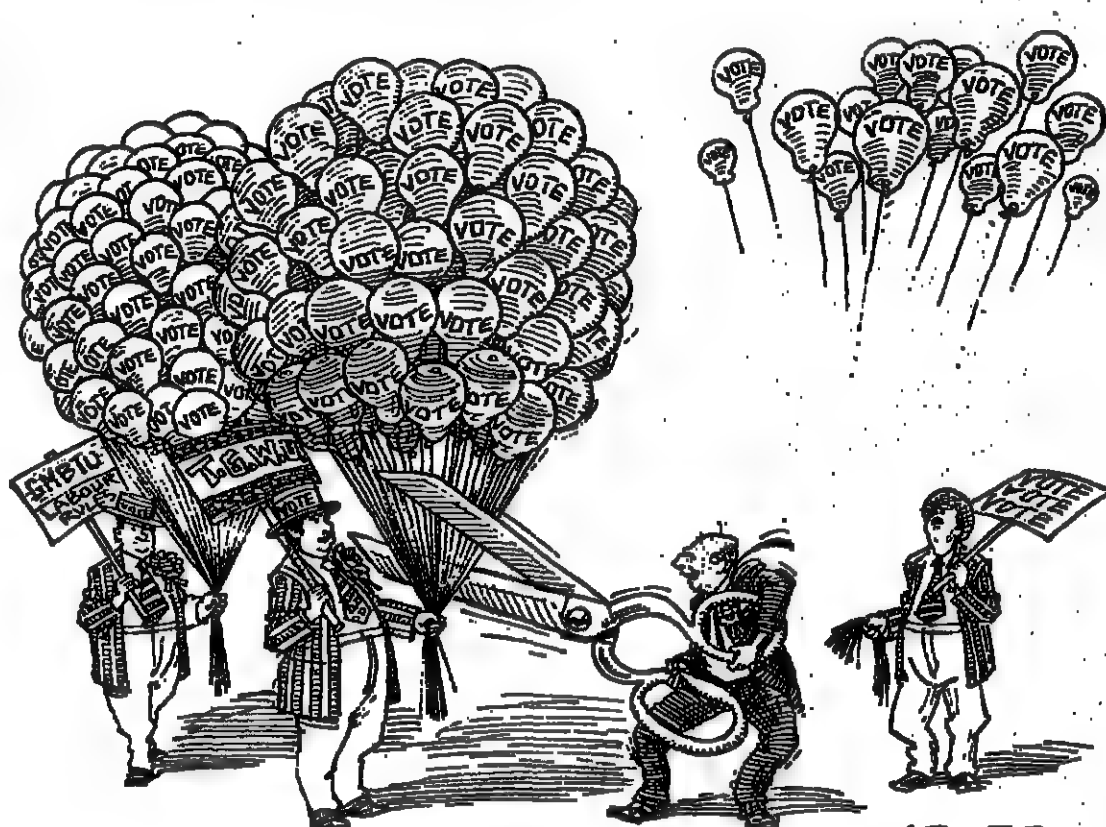
When will the victories of the pro-democracy movement cease? Even the ramparts of Walworth Road no longer appear invulnerable. Scarcely a voice of old-guard protest was heard this week when Labour's executive announced a change (to be rubber-stamped by this autumn's conference and introduced after the election) that will finally end 90 years of candidate-selection procedures which made the politics of Byzantium look simple.

In future, selections will be conducted on the "one-member one-vote" principle — as advocated by the SDP Gang of Four a decade ago, and as now recommended by 87 per cent of constituency Labour parties. Neil Kinnock has declared himself delighted by the constituency opinion, as well he might be, for the new method should put paid to Birkenhead-style nonsense. In future, ideological correctness in a would-be candidate may matter less than ability to do the job. Simultaneously, mandatory reselection — a main cause of the SDP's defection in 1981 — will end. And so a chapter in Labour constitutional history is over.

Or is it? There is more than a hint, in the recent announcement, of a democratic bandwagon that could keep rolling.

The innocent bystander has never been able to understand why Labour preferred complexity and smoke-filled rooms to doing things the easy way. The difficulty has been the unions who, until now, have had a direct say in choosing candidates. Labour's organic relationship with trade unions dates from the party's earliest days, but for a long time relations have been strained, and as early as the 1950s some far-sighted politicians were envisaging an amicable divorce — in 1959 Douglas Jay even suggested dropping the label "Labour". Since, however, the unions not only financed the party's organisation, but also controlled its constitution, no change could happen without their consent. In any case, most middle-class members cherished the mystical notion of a "working class" movement.

In the past, many Labour seats were fiefdoms run by a single



Ben Pimlott sees dangers as well as opportunities in the party's changes and urges it to pursue democracy further

union whose domination of a constituency management committee ensured the selection of its nominee. This system was disintegrating even before the unworkable electoral college method was introduced after the 1987 election as a half way house — with up to 40 per cent of the vote still held by the unions, and the rest made up by a membership ballot. As far as the leadership was concerned that had been part of the problem. The fragmentation of the old structure had opened the door to intriguing by small groups.

The new system should end the worst of such abuses. But, as it stands, one-member one-vote also deprives unions of virtually all say in parliamentary choices. Couple this with the likely decision to cut the union block vote at party conference from 90 to 70 per cent, and you are looking at a very

different party, in which unions have greatly reduced importance. Nobody gets a free lunch. The unions are not renowned for their altruistic justice, and the decision to accept these moves arises out of a shrewd perception of their self-interest. They urgently want a change of government and seek to increase the Kinnock leadership's chances through an orderly retreat.

Yet there remains a difficulty. Not only are many unionists sentimental about the party they set up, Labour leaders are worried about losing the sometimes benign influence of unions. If the party has another of its funny turns, the ability of unions to provide a counterweight to the over-excitement of activists may be sorely missed; and there is a danger that the unions, no longer able to take control themselves, may lose interest in paying the bills.

Thus Labour's new problem is going to be, not how to keep the unions at arm's length, but how to keep an arm's-length marriage happy and stable. One clever idea, floated by Walworth Road this week and intended for further investigation after conference, is to give one-member one-vote a new twist. Instead of just applying it to those who pay the individual member's £10 sub, all those technically members of the party through their membership of a political-levy-paying affiliated union would be entitled to vote as well. In this way, Mr Kinnock's headache — how to end the unworkable local electoral college system, yet keep the unions involved — would be solved. In place of the claques of yesteryear, there would be a selectorate with a national total of more than four million, and parliamentary selec-

tions with all the excitement of American primaries.

By widening the franchise, the new rule would all the more effectively swamp dissident activists. It would give many Labour voters a direct sense of participation. The involvement of large numbers of ordinary people would ensure the safety of such MPs as Frank Field. It would also present Labour, after its history of skulduggery, as the most democratically in-touch party in Britain.

It is a pity that such a scheme, in its present form, is completely crackers. Apart from questions of principle — it is a problem, to say the least, that a high proportion of levy-paying union members vote for the Conservative or other parties — the effects are, in reality, unpredictable. The cosy assumption that the scheme would result in "sensible candidates" could be wrong: though it is a fair bet that able young carpetbaggers (who currently provide the backbone of Labour's front bench) would be passed over in favour of local notables or national glamour candidates. More important, it is impracticable. With an average of almost 7,000 potential voters in each constituency, the problem of working out who was and who was not a political-levy-payer entitled to vote would be an Electoral Reform Society nightmare.

Nevertheless, the idea is an interesting pointer. The outer edge of fantasy is where all the most important notions start. This one is a reflection of a powerful impulse in the Labour party to widen its concept of democracy, at precisely the time when decision-making over policy is becoming more centralised. Labour's next constitutional rule to come under scrutiny, almost certainly, will be the irrational electoral college, which elected the present leader and deputy leader. This anomaly will inevitably go.

When it does, it is likely to be replaced by a simple reversion to election by MPs? The logic of this week's proposed reform, and of the more fundamental one, is of a further step down the plebiscitary, primary path.

The author is professor of politics at Birkbeck College, London.

Battery included

The humble battery hen has found a new champion. Bruce Kent, the veteran nuclear disarmament campaigner, has assumed a new role as defender of chicken rights. He wants battery cages banned and detects the hand of his old adversary in the Ministry of Agriculture's response to his call. "The Ministry must have been sent down the road to the Ministry of Defence to pick up a few lines in propaganda," he writes in this week's *Catholic Herald*.

According to the agriculture ministry, "a unilateral ban on

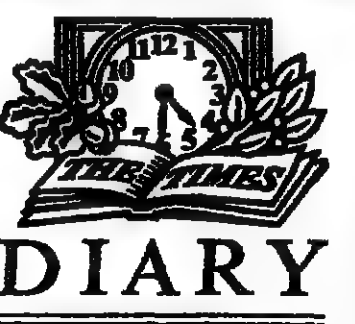
multilateral battery negotiations and the danger of unilateral action? Would the battery balance which has kept the peace for 40 years be upset? Or am I getting the issues confused?"

● The new resident of Lambeth Palace will be interested to learn that the European Commission seems not to think that being an archbishop is a real job. A recent official ruling on "uniform application of the combined customs nomenclature" in preparation for 1992 declares: "Judges' gowns, church vestments... are not considered to be industrial or occupational garments."

Britain's Queen

Far from the perils of darkest Africa, the African Queen — the leaky old tub which co-starred with Katharine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart in the 1951 film of C.S. Forester's novel — has found a new lease of life cruising calmer waters. The 78-year-old boat is now making a stately progress around Europe promoting holidays not in central Africa but in Florida. Already it has chugged up the Seine and the Rhine and next month arrives in Britain, to visit Guernsey and Bristol.

"She has a great deal of character and a legendary sea-faring history. As the biggest part of American history is Hollywood, she is bound to be a big seller," says a very transatlantic-sounding PR man. Sorry to disappoint, but the Queen is, in fact, merely coming home. She was built at Lytham St Anne's.



Out of range

The House of Lords rifle team has apparently improved its chances in today's showdown with the Commons by losing one of its members, the Prince of Wales. He was expected to shoot for the peers as part of the celebrations for the centenary of the National Rifle Association, but the broken arm has ruled him out, much to the disappointment of the Commons team. Their captain, Michael Colvin, says: "He's not much of a crack shot. We won easily the last time he took part."

The contest takes place at Bisley, where the Commons team will include such Tory big guns as Michael Mates and John Cope, the Northern Ireland minister and a former gunner. The MPs lead the peers in the annual dual of 3ft silver vases which nobody really wants to win. "They are hideous," says Colvin. Parliamentary attendees have a vested interest in the peers winning. "The vases weigh a ton and it takes four of them to move them the quarter of a mile from the Lord Chancellor's house to the Speaker's," says Colvin.

Couple of swells

Sham Singh Jassar, the mayor of Hounslow, was obliged to play musical chairs when he and five friends went to see Stephen Sondheim's rarely performed water musical, *The Frogs*, at Brentford's public swimming baths the other evening. Just before the show began poolside seats had to be found for the actress Julia McKenzie and a bearded male friend, resulting in a shuffle along the VIP row.

Only afterwards did the mayor's party learn that the shy latecomer was Sondheim himself, taking a break from rehearsals of his new show, *Into the Woods*. "We had no idea he was going to turn up," says producer John Gardsyne. "And when the cast heard he was in the audience they put on an extra special performance." Sondheim enjoyed himself thoroughly. "It was a swell show," he said.

● The journalistic silliness season is nigh. The cover story of *New Scientist* this week is about the problems faced by aerodynamic engineers attempting to improve the design of... the frisbee.

A far better thing

Margaret Thatcher's enduring confession that Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* was her favourite book as a child has surprised the latest Dickens biographer, Peter Ackroyd. Mrs Thatcher nominated the classic — opening line: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" — when asked by the Australian librarian Margaret Berkata to contribute to a survey

of the reading habits of the rich and famous.

Ackroyd, whose Bible-sized life appears in September, was intrigued by the choice. "It is one of Dickens's darkest novels, a story of despair and death. It is an unjustly under-rated novel. I must admit it's an unusual choice for Mrs Thatcher." Surely she cannot have been attracted by the storyline? "It's about the working class rising up to make a bloody revenge on the rich and powerful," says Ackroyd.

Rates of exchange

A certain confusion still attends Labour's policy on the poll tax. David Blunkett, the shadow local government minister, emerged from the national executive's meeting to announce to waiting media-folk that agreement had finally been reached on the subject that has given Bryan Gould and other party leaders so many sleepless nights. With the television cameras rolling, Blunkett declared: "We have now got agreement on the quickest way to get rid of the rates." After a puzzled silence, a sympathetic reporter pointed out to Blunkett that the executive had voted to abolish the poll tax and restore the rates, rather than the other way round. Blunkett tried again: "We are now in a position to move as quickly as possible to get rid of the rates." Labour's press officer, Colin Byrne, diplomatically stepped in: "Can we do that take

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1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

THE LIVERPOOL CAULDRON

Labour's national executive decided on Wednesday that toughness remains the only policy towards its Liverpool district party, which is still heavily polluted by Militant and its supporters. The local party has been duly suspended for the second time in five years. Neil Kinnock has used an embarrassing fringe to assert his political virility and demonstrate to the public his vigour in pursuit of moderation.

Mr Kinnock said on Wednesday that Liverpoolians were "sick and tired of the posturing of people who constantly flout their responsibilities". But if Mr Kinnock's hope is simply to go on making life as difficult as possible for Militant until it gives up, the strategy does not seem to be working. Liverpool's leftists pop up again whenever they are suppressed. And every time they do so, the party nationally is vulnerable to the charge that they are still the true face of Labour-in-office.

The 14 Liverpool councillors who refused to vote for an official Labour group proposal to raise council house rents have had the party whip removed. The district auditor is now considering suspending the council, and taking over the running of its business and surcharging its councillors unless the books are promptly balanced. Labour must distance itself from that impending disaster as fast as it can.

There is more behind Liverpool politics than Militant infiltration and the never-ending tug-of-war over council finance. A police enquiry is now in hand into allegations of widespread municipal corruption. Some of those who were the object of Mr Kinnock's earlier efforts to cleanse the Liverpool party of Militant, such as the former deputy council leader Derek Hatton, have indicated their willingness to assist that enquiry.

The city's two leading churches, Archbishop Derek Worlock and Bishop David Sheppard, have recently returned from a trip to Westminster to appeal for help from Chris Patten, the environment secretary (who must be very tempted to stand back and let the worst happen), from Mr Kinnock (who will have needed no urging to plunge in) and from the Liberals' Paddy Ashdown (whose members on

Liverpool council have been in mischievous alliance with the Militant block.)

The politics of Liverpool are deeply rooted in the city's religious history. Today, local prelates command few votes, though once the Catholic archbishop had only to wish a certain action on the council and it was done. But the timely collapse of the old sectarian tradition of Liverpool politics, the end of Catholic dominance of the Labour party in particular, laid the foundations for the rise of Militant.

Much the same happened in other metropolitan Labour parties, often dominated by a complacent and narrow-minded "Catholic mafia" reflecting the concentration of Irish expatriates in industrial inner-cities. In some cases, the Trotskyists are actually the children and grandchildren of the old Catholic mafia, ideologically disillusioned with the stagnation and Tammany Hall tradition of the old-style Labour parties. Some hard-left Labour parties even became virulently anticlerical.

Liverpool sectarianism was never a pretty sight. While the Catholics voted Labour, the Protestants, working class or not, would vote for the Orange or unionist ticket from which the city's present Conservatives descend. Many working class Protestants now vote Labour, many prosperous Catholics Tory. But tradition still guarantees Labour a large proportion of the Catholic vote, a reflex which explains why, however dreadfully Labour runs Liverpool, it has had an almost unbroken hold on power.

Mr Kinnock's best hope is that his other reforms announced this week will supplement Wednesday's suspensions and rid him of these turbulent gadflies. The proposals aimed at running local parties on the basis of one-member-one-vote - rather than through sometimes phoney union membership lists - will remove Militant's main infiltration route, through affiliated trade union branches. This is the true rot within the Labour party. It is to Mr Kinnock's credit that he wishes to get rid of it. It is to his party's shame that he has not yet succeeded. Genuine democracy in Liverpool's Labour party would be the most powerful antidote to the Militant poison.

A BALANCE FOR IRAQ

The praise lavished by Arab leaders on President Mubarak's peacemaking between Iraq and Kuwait this week reflects more than their immediate aim, which was to help avert an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. President Saddam Hussein's latest burst of aggression, this time directed against Iraq's allies, has impressed on Iraq's militarily weak neighbours the need for a regional counter-point to Baghdad. Egypt, which despite its economic weakness is a militarily significant contender for the leadership of the Arab world, has again become indispensable to the Arab balance of power.

Even if the deal now being thrashed out amounts to an almost complete Kuwaiti surrender to Baghdad's outrageous terms, Arab governments have an interest in presenting it as a triumph for Egyptian diplomacy. That would remind President Saddam that they do not intend him to stalk the Middle East unchallenged.

The end of the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq has upset a fragile equilibrium. Stalemate, while publicly deplored, privately suited their weaker neighbours. Israel profited most from Iraq's preoccupation, but for Kuwait too, it was better that its giant neighbours should fight over the Shatt al-Arab waterway than that Iraq should press its longstanding claims to Kuwaiti islands in the Gulf. Much as the Arab world distrusts Iran, President Saddam has never inspired confidence even among his allies. The quiet overtures to Iran by the Gulf states reflect nervousness about Iraq's soaring ambitions.

Thanks in part to \$35 billion in interest-free loans from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Iraq has emerged from the war in formidable shape militarily but severely damaged economically: a dangerous combination for a dictatorship. Having backed Baghdad while war lasted, the Gulf states, Jordan and Saudi Arabia are now uncertain how to restrain Iraqi power. Until this week, they have chosen the course of least

resistance, feeding the megalomania of a man who likes to be compared to President Nasser.

Iraq's use of chemical weapons, first against Iran and then against its own Kurdish people, pervertedly made it a force to be reckoned with. When President Saddam announced on April 2 that Iraq would not hesitate, if attacked, to let its "fire consume half of Israel", Arab leaders rushed to express their solidarity. The Arab summit in May defended the execution of the "convicted spy", Farzad Bazoft, and Iraq's attempts to obtain nuclear and chemical technology from the West. Even Syria, Iraq's enemy, dismissed the idea that it could be "considered a threat to another Arab country" as "illogical". Now President Saddam has swivelled his guns, justifying aggressive threats by accusing "some Arab rulers" of joining America to "undermine Arab interests and security".

For now, adulation will give way to appeasement, in the form of debt forgiveness and yet more economic aid. If President Saddam can relieve the economic hardship at home caused by war damage, the continued drain of maintaining (and extravagantly re-equipping) a million-strong army, and astronomical foreign debt, his uneasy allies may hope for a lull in foreign adventurism. But there is a growing recognition that this may only defer the reckoning, unless the Arab world's diplomatic isolation can be reduced.

Buried in some of the encyclopaedic communiqués issued by Arab gatherings in recent months are references welcoming "positive" developments in relations with Western Europe, and calls on the United States to rebuild bridges with the Arab world. For such a strategy, Egypt would be the natural architect. If Arab countries are serious about righting the balance of terror on their own doorsteps, they may find wretchedly poor but respectable Egypt a better investment for their petrodollars than a militant Iraq.

DEVOLVING THE ARTS

Minister for the arts is a ghastly job. Trapped between the rock of Treasury intransigence and the hard place of a massively self-important lobby, the incumbent has a brutal choice. Side with the lobby and he is condemned to "failure to deliver". Side with the Treasury and every evening engagement becomes a misery. To cap it all, the minister's job is almost exclusively to finance a doppelganger of himself, the Arts Council chairman. Two bodies supposedly laying down "policy on the arts" is a ridiculous duplication.

The old minister, Richard Luce, was regarded as a success because he professed a blissful ignorance of all arts, and wandered about looking nice. Blame for any government shortcomings attached to the Arts Council or the Treasury or Margaret Thatcher, never to Mr Luce. The arts world grew to love him and when the Treasury suddenly gave the arts an eccentric 12 per cent increase in 1989, he effortlessly took the credit.

His successor, David Mellor, has a hard job. He is ambitious, activist and a "lover of the arts". How he will disentangle his zest for policy innovation and publicity from that of policy innovation and publicity from the Arts Council chairman, Peter Palumbo, has the yet to be seen. His appointment shows that the prime minister recognises there is a political return to an active arts policy. Squeezing that return from an artistic community disinclined to believe good news about itself is not easy.

Mr Mellor inherits from Mr Luce a most important shift in public strategy. Although important shift in public strategy. Although there has been a 22 per cent real terms rise in public finance for the arts in the past decade, it has been directed towards what is known as subsidised funding rather than flat-rate subsidisation. This has benefited the more dynamic arts organisations, especially in the regions, at

the expense of the big London companies long run as heavily unionised nationalised industries. Private fund-raising rather than public deficit now draws down extra grant.

Mr Mellor's task is to extend this principle from the corporate to the individual sector. The Treasury's payroll-giving scheme for tax deductibility has been a fiasco. The Treasury hates open-ended tax expenditure, and has blighted British charities as a result. But the logical extension of Mr Luce's reform is to encourage audiences, members, participants, enthusiasts to support their chosen arts, rather than ministries, officials or the inertia-bound Arts Council.

The new minister's second and more controversial task is to implement the regionalisation of such direct subsidies as are proper in an aesthetically aware state. The devolution of Arts Council money has already been declared, to the dismay of many London companies. In future, representatives of the people of Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol will determine the nation's patronage of their local arts. This is right and proper, however painful the exercise may prove for both local and national disburers of funds.

Of course the great national institutions need a measure of security and generosity - though they would deserve it better if they stopped regarding their subsidy as a divine right and everybody else's as a needless extravagance. Generosity they have had. Generosity they have wasted. Generosity they still deserve. But over-centralism in arts patronage is a sign of an immature democracy. Devolution, to regions, to cities, to corporate sponsors, to individuals is the better route. Mr Mellor should make it his motto.

EC linchpin for general election

From Dr William Wallace

Sir, The Prime Minister's "end of term" speech to the 1992 committee (report, July 20; Diary, July 21) has led to speculation on potential dates for the next general election. The possibility has been raised of her government's running for a full five-year term to an election in early July, 1992.

The calendar of the European Community ought to make ministers very wary of that option. On July 1, 1992 the British government will take over the presidency of the Council of Ministers, taking its turn in the six-monthly rotation among the 12 member governments. The presidency provides the opportunity for each government to push its priorities further up the Community agenda, to define European priorities more clearly in its own terms and to influence the style and content of the Brussels debate.

Mrs Thatcher's government must make good use of its last period of office in the presidency in 1986 to give added impetus to the proposals to complete the internal market by 1992. The Italian government, now in office, is understandably emphasising the importance of Mediterranean issues to the Community.

The first month of a presidency is crucial in setting an agenda, picking up the threads of negotiations already under way and consulting with the Commission and with other governments. It is in terms of pursuing British interests within Europe, the worst possible time to be approaching the climax of an election campaign, in which European issues may well be a factor.

Whether or not the current government is re-elected for a fourth term, or whether a new and untried government emerges, some weeks will be needed for incoming ministers to draw breath and learn their dossiers. The latest feasible date for an election should therefore be May, 1992 - or early June in extremis.

Yours etc,
WILLIAM WALLACE
(Deputy director),
The Royal Institute of International Affairs,
Chatham House,
10 St James's Square, SW1,
July 25.

Poll tax payment

From Mr R. Monroe

Sir, A report (July 18) by Robin Oakley and Rodney Lord said that non-payment of the community charge, coupled with higher public spending, is putting the government's surplus at risk.

Neither I, nor my wife, has paid one penny of the £341 community charge that is due from each of us but this is entirely the fault of the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral.

Within days of receiving their demand for the charge I signed a direct debit provided by the director of finance to enable him to collect the charges from my bank in ten monthly instalments starting in May. To date, no debits have been made and when I recently telephoned his office I was told that I had not yet been "put on the computer" but probably would be in time for them to collect the August payments.

Apparently no extension of time will be allowed for full payment so it is their intention to increase the monthly payments to compensate for their inefficiency.

Doubtless Wirral will be amongst the many local authorities who will complain that their financial planning has been thrown off course by those who have failed to pay or paid late and this will be an additional excuse for higher charges next year.

Yours faithfully,
R. MONROE,
Stivelsoms, Village Road,
Lower Heswall,
Wirral,
July 23.

Aid for ANC

From Mr Paul Renshaw

Sir, Mrs Thatcher's belated recognition (report, July 19) of the crucial role which the leadership of the ANC must play in the creation of a non-racial South Africa is much to be welcomed. It will be even better if HM Government, with its EC partners, now offers very substantial financial support for the ANC and other organisations pledged to seek a fully democratic solution to South Africa's crisis of state.

Such a solution remains threatened by the conflict in Natal, which tragically continues to make headline news. As church leaders told me in Pietermaritzburg recently, Mr F. W. de Klerk, as State President, and Chief Buthelezi, as KwaZulu's Minister of Police, need to take urgent, decisive action to restore law and order in a manner which will create confidence that they have democracy for all South Africans truly at heart.

Given Mrs Thatcher's close relationship with both leaders, HM Government is well placed to bring influence to bear on Pretoria and Ulundi. Without a rapid solution, negotiations will be jeopardised and the non-racial development of South Africa could still be aborted.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL RENSHAW
(Africa secretary),
The British Council of Churches,
Inter-Church House,
35-41 Lower Marsh, SE1,
July 23.

Defence of infant death study

From Dr P. J. Fleming and others

Sir, Mr Colridge Smith (July 24) suggests that our work on sudden infant death syndrome might well have caused distress to parents after the death of their babies. We have no reason to believe that this is true and indeed the study was originally instituted largely at the request of bereaved parents who wished for carefully collected information about what had happened to their babies to be made use of in terms of trying to understand how and why the children had died.

The main aim of the contact which our team had with bereaved parents was to provide help and support to those parents, almost all of whom were very keen to give a detailed account of what had happened. This information was then used to provide bereavement counselling and support over a prolonged period.

The suggestion of observer bias in the collection of data was addressed by us. We took great care in the way in which the information was collected both from the families of infants who had died and from controls. The way in which all questions were asked and the approach to the interview by the three people involved were standardised to as great an extent as was possible, bearing in mind our prime objective of helping the families.

The information about bedding and sleeping position was only one facet of a study concerning growth, development, medical, social and environmental factors and their relevance to "cot death".

The difference we observed in the sleeping positions between infants who died and the control infants was large, but was actually slightly smaller than the difference observed in some previously published studies, including the Koozeleiden report of the Department of Health.

In some countries (e.g., Hong Kong, Czechoslovakia) where the supine sleeping position is almost universal for babies, the incidence of cot death is very low. Previous studies published from Ireland, France, the United Kingdom and Australia have confirmed the

higher risk of cot death for infants nursed in the prone position. A recent paper from Holland showed that the incidence of cot death there had fallen when recommended practice changed from the prone to the supine nursing of infants.

The widespread UK practice of prone nursing of infants is of relatively recent origin. It is based on extrapolation of results of studies of premature babies for whom the prone position confers some respiratory advantage. In our paper we were most careful to point out that premature infants and those who vomit whenever they are laid flat may be better prone.

However, for all other infants we are not aware of any evidence that the prone position confers any advantage and no published study of which we are aware has shown that the risk of cot death is lower for babies nursed in the prone position.

The only way in which information about the sudden and unexpected death of a baby can be collected is by discussion with the parents. In our study the combination of such information with similar information collected quickly from carefully matched control infants in the same community allowed the identification of potentially important differences between the two groups.

If results obtained by careful study do not fit in with previously held but unproven ideas about infant care it is surely appropriate to re-examine the basis of those ideas. We should of course have preferred to develop the debate of this subject through the columns of the learned journals rather than your own.

Yours faithfully,
PETER FLEMING
(Consultant paediatrician),
P. J. BERRY
(Consultant pathologist),
RUTH GILBERT
(Lecturer in child health),
University of Bristol,
Department of Child Health,
Bristol Maternity Hospital,
Southwell Street,
Bristol, Avon,
July 25.

Community relations

From Mr Jonathan S. Stanley

Sir, Your report (July 18) of the Commission for Racial Equality's reluctance of community relations councils (now racial equality councils) is welcome. However, in reporting the administrative and structural changes involved, you failed to identify the conceptual shift of which the reluctance was only one aspect.

Justly or not, the Commission has long been criticised by many members of Britain's black and ethnic minority communities for pursuing a condescending and institutionalised approach to issues of race relations. It was said that the Commission was so busy acting in the best interests of those communities that it had no time to discover what their concerns were or how they wanted them addressed.

The restructuring of community relations councils was only part of the launch of "the new partnership for racial equality" which explicitly acknowledges a past tendency on the part of the Commission to over-centralise, and under-emphasise the right of Britain's black and ethnic minority communities to determine their own solutions to concerns which they themselves identify.

The new partnership is above all a declaration of intent on the part of the Commission to work in co-operation with organisations representative of those communities to an agenda determined jointly.

So far, the signs are promising. Joint national and regional planning processes are already under way, and the Commission's various divisions are displaying a new and refreshing willingness to share information, and support and co-operate in joint ventures.

Yours faithfully,
J. S. STANLEY (Director),
Greater London Action for Racial Equality,
Southbank House,
Black Prince Road, SE1,
July 18.

Building controls

From Mr John Brodric

Sir, The proposal to make unauthorised building a criminal offence (report, July 23) is presumably aimed at gross breaches of planning regulations. However, the interests of the private citizen are more frequently harmed by developers making modifications to buildings as they build and then presenting these to the local planning authority as a fait accompli.

My experience in monitoring a property development in St Albans suggests that so long as a developer does not grossly abuse a planning approval he can do as he pleases without prior reference to the local authority.

Local planning control is hamstrung by the fear that if unauthorised building is halted, massive civil damages will be incurred when, two years later, the court takes a lenient view of the transgression.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BRODRICK,
13 Cunningham Hill Road,
St Albans, Hertfordshire,
July 23.

NHS reforms

From Sir Reginald Murley

Sir, In his letter (July 21) concerning Dr Lefanu's article (July 18) it is easy to see where the Secretary of State and his department have erred. Mr Clarke claims that budgeting general practitioners will be able to purchase with "NHS money" (i.e., taxpayers' money) a wide variety of specialist medical and surgical services.

Like many others, I have been eclectic in my choice of both NHS and private services: two heart attacks, well treated in the NHS some years ago when few independent hospitals had intensive-care facilities; and, more recently, a hip replacement and coronary bypass surgery beautifully done in the private sector.

Those operations have been paid for by the private insurers I have happily employed for many years past. However, I would certainly not elect to pay the family private insurance premium

to my general practitioner and then leave it to him to decide how that money should be spent. Why, therefore, should I give my GP control of NHS tax-derived funds for the purchase of specialist and hospital care in the NHS?

Mr Clarke refers to the "£32,000 a year to help meet the costs incurred" which will be paid to a fund-holding practice; but, before signing on with such a practice, I believe that many better informed NHS patients will be questioning whether this system truly offers them consumer choice.

I suspect that most would prefer to have genuine medical insurance, under their personal control, rather than leave it to State-employed doctors and other officials to spend their taxes for them. As one of the few remaining nationalised enterprises in this country, it is not time to offer real consumer freedom and choice by denationalizing the NHS?

Yours faithfully,
REGINALD MURLEY,
Cobden Hill House,
63 Cobden Hill,
Radlett, Hertfordshire,
July 21.

Language teaching

From Professor G. Singh

Sir, To equate, as Professor Pointon does (July 21), teaching and examining French students of physics at Masters' level with teaching and examining a student of Italian at PhD level in the medium of the Italian language betrays a complete disregard for or misunderstanding of what a PhD student is required to achieve in terms of first-hand critical thought, perception and judgment.

These, by their very nature, presuppose in a PhD student a far greater command over the analytical subtleties and complexities of Italian than he can possibly muster after six or for that matter ten years' study of the language. Even professors of Italian whose mother tongue is English write their books or publish the fruits of their research in English rather than in the language they profess.

Yours faithfully,
G. SINGH,
The Queen's University of Belfast,
Department of Italian Language and Literature,
Belfast BT7 1NN,
July 23.

to my general practitioner and then leave it to him to decide how that money should be spent. Why, therefore, should I give my GP control of NHS tax-derived funds for the purchase of specialist and hospital care in the NHS?

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Yours faithfully,
REGINALD MURLEY,
Cobden Hill House,
63 Cobden Hill,
Radlett, Hertfordshire,
July 21.

Fairer way with prosecutions

From Mr Edward Grayson

Sir, Your leading article's conclusion (July 18) on the Crown Prosecution Service. There must be better ways of associating the police with the CPS and with the conduct of the eventual trial.

would have been greatly assisted if the home affairs committee of the House of Commons had acted immediately upon a recommendation by the Law Society. In its evidence to the committee it dwelt upon the key flaw in the present system for which the CPS is without effective control yet nevertheless for which in court it is always accountable.

This is the existence of the bureaucratic units mentioned in your summarized annual report of the CPS (July 13). The units are the administrative source, under exclusive police control, for which the CPS is responsible when delays occur in getting documents before the court.

The chairman of the Law Society's criminal law committee described the units to the home affairs committee as buffers "between [the officer who is actually in charge of the case] and the Crown Prosecution Service". The society had previously explained that its committee recommends that consideration be given to the introduction of regulations setting out the accountability of the police officer in charge of a case for provision of specified information to CPS within time limits. The police would be responsible for enforcing any sanction for breach of these regulations.

The Government in reply last week to the home affairs committee's report, noted that it had off-loaded to a working group any action on documentary delay. It ignored the Law Society's constructive plea for police sanctions in case of breaches of the regulations.

It must surely be in the public interest as well as that of the CPS for the working group to regard this issue of communications between the CPS and the police for preparation of papers for "the conduct of the eventual trial" as one of the greatest urgency. The reasons were explained in your leading article, but we also need to be fair to the Crown Prosecution Service to which the blame for delay is so often wrongly directed.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
EDWARD GRAYSON,
4 Paper Buildings, Temple, EC4,
July 23.

Care facilities

From Dr Harry Jacobs

Sir, The news that adequate funding for "community care" for the mentally ill will be absent, while care facilities are being destroyed massively (report, July 19), rings like an added death knell for the hapless sufferers of current policy.

It seems impossible to secure reasoned discussion around the proposition that at least brief periods of in-patient care are a life and death part of the treatment options in managing the acutely suicidal and the acutely paranoid sufferer: both for him, his relations and the innocent public at large.

The sheer scale of irretrievable destruction of in-patient beds, compared with realistic need for succour, must bring the hearts of those with trained and informed knowledge. Many members of my society fully favour much smaller, human scale in-patient/community psychiatric units. Most are appalled at the avoidable hurt being inflicted on the most vulnerable members of society.

Yours faithfully,
HARRY JACOBS
(Chairman, Society of Clinical Psychiatricians),
The Coach House,
Wormingford,
Colchester, Essex,
July 20.

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Healthy dogs

From the Secretary of the Pet Health Council

Sir, Your report (July 21) on banning dogs from parks failed to point out that the risk of disease to humans from infected dog faeces would be dramatically reduced if all owners regularly wormed their dogs, especially in the puppy stage. This is an inexpensive and simple matter of feeding the animal worming tablets at least twice a year.

Educating owners about the importance of worming their dogs should be an intrinsic part of the "clear-up" message and has been a major element of our public awareness programme for some years.

Yours faithfully,
STEWART ROSE,
Secretary,
The Pet Health Council,
4 Bedford Square, WC1,
July 23.

Ancient hooligans

From Mr V. Baggot

Sir, Mr J. H. Keen's letter (July 24) on Scottish football problems in 1424 left readers with a problem: "liij d" is clearly a misreading of "liij d". Hence the expression: "Stop that or I'll give you a fourpenny one".

Yours faithfully,
V. BAGGOTT,
Townsend Cottage,
Wootton, Almeley,
Hereford,
July 24.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

July 26: Mr David Moss was received in audience by The Queen upon his appointment as British High Commissioner to New Zealand and Governor of Pitcairn.

Mrs Moss was received by Her Majesty.

His Excellency Mr William S K Matovu was received in audience by The Queen and took leave upon His Excellency relinquishing his appointment as High Commissioner for Uganda.

Mr Roger Carrick was received in audience by The Queen and kissed hands upon his appointment as Her Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at Jakarta.

Mrs Carrick was received by The Queen.

Mr Tristan Gard-Jones, MP was received by The Queen and delivered up his Wand of Office as Treasurer of the Household.

Mr Alastair Goodlad, MP was received by Her Majesty, delivered up his Wand of Office as Comptroller of the Household, and received from The Queen his Wand of Office as Treasurer of the Household.

Mr George Young, Bt, MP was received by The Queen upon his appointment as Comptroller of the Household and received from Her Majesty his Wand of Office.

Mr Anthony Durant, MP was received by The Queen and delivered up his Wand of Office as Vice-Chamberlain of the Household.

Mr David Lightbown, MP was received by The Queen upon his appointment as Vice-Chamberlain of the Household and received from Her Majesty his Wand of Office.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh gave an Afternoon Party in the Garden of Buckingham Palace.

The Duke and Duchess of Kent, Prince and Princess Michael of Kent were present.

Her Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms and The Queen's Body Guard of the Yeoman of the Guard were on duty.

The Bands of the Irish Guards and the 2nd and 3rd Royal Tank Regiments played selections of music during the afternoon.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh embarked in HM Yacht Britannia this evening at Portsmouth and were received by the Mayor of Portsmouth (Mr S Rapson).

The Countess of Airlie, Rear-Admiral Sir Paul Greening and Wing Commander David Walker, RAF were in attendance.

The Duchess of York today visited the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Yorkhill, Glasgow and inaugurated their new Total Body Scanner Unit.

Her Royal Highness was received by Her Majesty, the Lord-Lieutenant for the City of Glasgow (Mrs Susan Baird, the Right Hon the Lord Provost).

Mrs John Spooner and Captain Alexander Baillie-Hamilton were in attendance.

CLARENCE HOUSE
July 26: Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, Colonel-in-Chief, The Royal Anglian Regiment, was represented by Sir Martin Gilliat at the Memorial Service for Lieutenant-General Sir Reginald Denning which was held in The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy today.

KENSINGTON PALACE
July 26: Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, Colonel-in-Chief, The Royal Anglian Regiment, was represented by Sir Martin Gilliat at the Memorial Service for Lieutenant-General Sir Reginald Denning which was held in The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy today.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE
RICHMOND PARK
July 26: Princess Alexandra, Honorary Commandant General of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, this afternoon received the winners of the Help for the Helpless Young Crime Campaign 1990 (Hong Kong).

Her Royal Highness, Patron of Alexandra House (Royal United Service Short Stay Residence for Service Children), later received Lieutenant-Colonel Charles McLaren on retiring as Comptroller and Lieutenant-Colonel James Estcourt upon assuming this appointment.

The Dowager Duchess of Abercorn
A service of thanksgiving for the life of the Dowager Duchess of Abercorn will be held in St Columba's Cathedral, Londonderry, on Tuesday, July 31, 1990, at 3.00 pm.

Girdlers' Company
The following have been elected officers of the Girdlers' Company for the ensuing year: Master, Mr J.S. Maitland; Upper Warden, Mr P.V. Straker; Middle Warden, Mr Thomas Crawley-Boeley; Lower Warden, Mr L.W. Fairclough.

Luncheons
Marketers' Company
The Lord Mayor, accompanied by the Lady Mayoress and Mr Sheriff and Mrs Gerald Edwards, was the guest of honour at a luncheon given by the Marketers' Company at the Mansion House yesterday. The Master, Mr G. Draper, presided, assisted by the Wardens, Mr R. Wilson, Mr G. Darby and Mr A. Boakes. Among others present were: The Masters of the Heralds' Office, the Palace of Westminster and the Palace of Whitehall.

Mr C.E. Darby and Miss F.A. Tardy
The engagement is announced between Charles Edward, second son of Mr and Mrs Cyril Darby, of Rock Farm House, Upper Harrogate, Northamptonshire, and Florence Agnes, daughter of Le General de Division and Mme Pierre Tardy, of Poitiers, France.

Captain E.J.S. Frost and Miss M.E. Clarkson
The engagement is announced between Edward Frost, 15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars, elder son of Mr and Mrs R.S. Frost, of Badsworth, Somerset, and Michele, elder daughter of Major and Mrs A.J. Clarkson, of Herford, West Germany.

Mr J.R.G. Hunter and Miss L.F. Bishop
The engagement is announced between John, son of Mr Gordon Hunter, of Rock Farm, Leach Lamond, Dumfriesshire, and Alexandra Graham, of Apperley, Gloucestershire, and Louise, daughter of Doctor Ian Bishop, of Chichester, Kent.

Mr P.W.S. Percival and Mrs H.H. Baker
The engagement is announced between Peter, only son of the late Colonel and Mrs E. Percival, of Fleet, Hampshire, and Hannelore, only daughter of the late Leonard Struch, of Berlin.

Lieutenant T.J. Stone, RM and Second Officer K.M. Wisla, WRNS
The engagement is announced between Tim, elder son of Mr and Mrs R. Stone, and Kim, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs D. Winslet.

Mr W.R.H. Tudhope and Miss M.J. Lamb
The engagement is announced between William, younger son of Mr and Mrs David Tudhope, of Wellington, New Zealand, and Maria, eldest daughter of Dr and Mrs Stephen Lamb, of Richmond, Surrey.

OBITUARIES

ANTHONY TASKER

Anthony Tasker, CBE, who was Assistant Secretary-General and managing director of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation of the Commonwealth Secretariat from 1974 to 1978, died aged 74 on July 19. He was born on March 27, 1916.

AFTER demobilisation at the end of the second world war Anthony Tasker spent four years, with Gervase Huxley, as organising director of the International Tea Market Expansion Board. The experience he gained there both of the economic conditions and political aspirations of tropical Commonwealth countries was to serve him well in all the later stages of his career.

Following one year spent in West Africa developing an export business, Tasker was hand-picked by Jack Campbell (now Lord Campbell of Eskdale) to become, in 1954, director of public relations with the Booker Group of Companies in the then British Guiana. This in fact meant far more than the media, covering relations with the increasingly important local politicians and with the group's employees at a time when Bookers were engaged in re-dimensioning their manufacturing operations and concentrating on sugar and rum and wholesaling and retailing.

He was outstandingly successful in his role, transforming not simply the way in which the company was regarded but, with Campbell's wholehearted support, the attitude of the company itself towards its civic role and towards the fostering of what he called "a vigorous and constructive nationalism".

One of Tasker's key concerns was increasing the number of Guyanese taking up executive posts within the group. This was backed, where needed, by professional educational programmes.

For the last five of his 13 years in Guyana, Tasker served as chairman of Bookers' resident board. He was

also appointed to the colony's Legislative Council, and then, in the lead-up to independence, to the country's Senate.

On returning to Britain, he was appointed in 1968 to succeed William Clark, the founding director of the Overseas Development Institute.

Tasker's years were to be not without controversy. During his period Teresa Hayter, who had been a research officer at the ODI, produced *Did as Imperialis*, published in 1971. But Tasker was able to transform Clark's somewhat singular creation into a self-sustaining organisation, widely recognised for its dissemination of high quality research.

From the ODI he was recruited, in 1974 by Sir Shridath "Sonny" Ramphal, then Commonwealth Secretary-General and himself a Guyanese, to become the sec-



ond managing director of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) and Assistant Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

During his four years in the job the CFTC expanded rapidly, becoming a highly visible feature of the Commonwealth connection, especially within smaller member countries where technical assistance from other developing Commonwealth countries, and training of their own citizens within such countries, proved often the most appropriate form of assistance.

This rapid growth owed much to Tasker's clarity of judgment, tenacity, and businesslike management but it also had its costs. The CFTC's very success made it inevitable that there would be moves to bring it more closely within the ambit of the

Secretariat's other activities which resulted, in Tasker's view, in some loss of managerial independence.

During the 1960s and 1970s Tasker served on many bodies promoting overseas development and the training of students from Third World countries including the Institute of Development Studies, the Overseas Service College, the British Volunteer Programme, the executive committee of the British Council and the economic and social committee of the EC.

Tasker's education at Bradford College and Christ Church, Oxford — where he played Mark Antony in an Oud production of *Julius Caesar* — was followed almost immediately by the outbreak of war. He joined the Royal Tank Regiment in 1940, served as an intelligence officer in the spearhead corps of Montgomery's Eighth Army in the Western Desert, fought in Sicily and Italy and was in Normandy with the Airborne Army. He was twice mentioned in despatches and is remembered as the first intelligence officer to have spotted the potential for a German counter-attack through the Ardennes. He ended the war aged 30 and a full colonel.

His personal philosophy — he was a son of the church — is expressed in his Henry M. Orlay lecture to the Royal Society of Arts which he delivered in 1970. Tasker's wry, sharp sense of humour is exhibited in a piece contributed to last May's issue of *Tank*, the journal of the Royal Tank Regiment, in which he describes being escorted through enemy lines, unarmed in an open scout car, to confirm the surrender of the Italian First Army in North Africa in May 1943. He was 27 at the time.

In 1940 he married Elizabeth Gilmor, who now survives him.

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ALAN CLARKE

Alan Clarke, director of television drama, died on July 25 of cancer, aged 54. He was born in Liverpool on October 28, 1935.

Alan Clarke's credits included some of the best and most provocative television plays of the last 20 years and he was one of the handful of directors to achieve something like a personal stamp in what, unlike the cinema, is regarded primarily as a writer's medium. He first made his name at the end of the 1960s when he directed Peter Terson's *The Last Train Through Harecastle Tunnel* for the BBC Wednesday Play series. He went to demonstrate his range by taking on Douglas Livingstone's seaside postcard comedy, *I Can't See My Little Willie*, Tony Parker's prison drama *A Life Is For Ever* and a reconstruction of the Craig-Bentley case, *To Encourage the Others*.

During the 1970s he directed an early Colin Welland play, *The Hallelujah Handshake*, and David Rudkin's *Penda's Fen*, which was repeated on Channel 4 last Sunday. The story of a boy on the brink of puberty who stirs a mysterious force in his local landscape, *Penda's Fen* remains one television drama's most challenging works. Clarke directed David Hare's first work for television, *Man Above Men*, a searching study of the legal system, and showed a fresh approach to literary adaptations with Solzhenitsyn's *The Love and Death of Captain Danton*.

In 1977 Clarke collaborated with the writer Roy Minton on *Scum*, a harsh and realistically-shot study of life in Borstal which was banned by the BBC because it was felt to give a distorted view. There was also disquiet over its violence and strong language. *Scum* became a cause célèbre, fiercely championed by television critics and resisted with equal fervour by Mrs Mary Whitehouse. Clarke went on to direct a cinema version which revived the old controversies when it was screened on Channel 4 in 1983. The Court of Appeal ruled that the Independent

Broadcasting Authority had made "a grave error of judgment" in allowing it to be shown. But the IBA won an appeal to the House of Lords.

Clarke worked fruitfully with David Leland on several television plays, of which the most notable was *Made in England*, one of a series of four about the shortcomings of the British educational system. Featuring a skinhead with disturbing conviction by Tim Roth, *Made in England* won the Prix Italia. With *Christine*, *Comet* and *Elephant*, Clarke turned his attention, as writer as well as director, to the troubled province of Northern Ireland. Ambitious in form (*Elephant* dispensed entirely with dialogue to show a series of sectarian killings), these were powerful artistic statements about a tragedy beyond the control of the politicians.

His recent work included an adroit reworking for television of Jim Cartwright's stage play, *Road*, a cheerless and uncompromising view of adolescence in the north of England, and *The Firm*, which dealt in similarly unwhimsical style with the mind of the football hooligan. Of Clarke's occasional ventures into the cinema, the most successful was *Rico, Sue and Bob Too* which echoed much of his television work in dealing with the economic and social tensions of contemporary Britain.

He is survived by his wife, Jane, and two children.

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His recent work included an adroit reworking for television of Jim Cartwright's stage play, *Road*, a cheerless and uncompromising view of adolescence in the north of England, and *The Firm*, which dealt in similarly unwhimsical style with the mind of the football hooligan. Of Clarke's occasional ventures into the cinema, the most successful was *Rico, Sue and Bob Too* which echoed much of his television work in dealing with the economic and social tensions of contemporary Britain.

He is survived by his wife, Jane, and two children.

During the 1970s he directed an early Colin Welland play, *The Hallelujah Handshake*, and David Rudkin's *Penda's Fen*, which was repeated on Channel 4 last Sunday. The story of a boy on the brink of puberty who stirs a mysterious force in his local landscape, *Penda's Fen* remains one television drama's most challenging works. Clarke directed David Hare's first work for television, *Man Above Men*, a searching study of the legal system, and showed a fresh approach to literary adaptations with Solzhenitsyn's *The Love and Death of Captain Danton*.

In 1977 Clarke collaborated with the writer Roy Minton on *Scum*, a harsh and realistically-shot study of life in Borstal which was banned by the BBC because it was felt to give a distorted view. There was also disquiet over its violence and strong language. *Scum* became a cause célèbre, fiercely championed by television critics and resisted with equal fervour by Mrs Mary Whitehouse. Clarke went on to direct a cinema version which revived the old controversies when it was screened on Channel 4 in 198

Taking a turn around the circles

George Hill goes down on the farm and discovers that corn circles are grist to a media mill, whether messages in Sumerian, natural phenomena — or simply hoaxes

In spite of the giant graffiti mockingly imprinted this week on a cornfield just under their noses, the research team seeking to crack the mystery of corn circles at Westbury Hill in Wiltshire mean to continue their vigil until the crop is harvested in two or three weeks' time. The standing corn is the writing-paper on which some little-understood influence inscribes, with uncanny precision, signs which seem to grow more numerous and more complex every year.

With five low-light video cameras trained day and night on the ripening cornfields which stretch away to the horizon from their vantage-point on the chalk ramparts of the prehistoric Bratton Fort, the team hopes to catch the moment of formation of one of the circles.

The scene at Bratton Fort on Wednesday, on the morning the hoaxers had been at work, did little to promote the credibility of the circles as a genuine scientific phenomenon. Down below was the evidence of the work of a party of buffoons to damage somebody else's property and livelihood, while high on the escarpment the angry and excited figure of Colin Andrews, one of the leaders of the project, was letting himself be drawn by bands of the international media into dropping hints which will not help workers in the field to gain respectable backers for future research.

An atmosphere of silly-season gaiety hung over the encampment. It will be harder than ever now to wrest the subject from the mystics who prefer supernatural to natural explanations, and the cynics who are satisfied that everything can be explained on the basis of bucolic humour or press circulation-battles. Because the story is all about ripening corn, it breaks every year just at the time when serious news tends to be afflicted by its usual summer drought. As Mr Andrews spoke of "an airborne consciousness", which he declared could not inappropriately be described as "supernatural", the representative of the *Today* newspaper stood at his shoulder with a proprietorial smile.

For those who have been so merrily making hay out of the corn in recent weeks, any turn in the tale, whether hoax or otherwise, can be turned to account except one: a natural explanation. A solution to the mystery would spoil the fun and they would be thrown back on the Loch Ness monster. So successful has the drive to mystification been, that a spokesman for the Meteorological

Office yesterday was still taking the classic attitude of conservative science to a puzzle with overtones of the occult, and dismissing the whole phenomenon as "a glorified hoax".

In spite of Wednesday's prank, and earlier jollities like the appearance of the message "WEARE-NOTALONE" on a Hampshire hillside in 1983, and last year's report of rings at an Essex village called Little Green (Little Green Men: goddit?), there can be no doubt that many circles are not hoaxes. If the 400 rings which have been reported this year are all man-made, then the sun must have touched an alarmingly large number of industrious pranksters. Many are in remote spots where the chances of publicity would be slight. Similar circles have been reported in many other countries where there has been no ballyhoo to encourage pranksters, and as long ago as 1936, 1918, and even 1678.

"It is usually easy to distinguish a natural circle from a man-made one by looking at the way the stalks have been pressed down," says Paul Fuller, the joint author of *Crop Circles — a Mystery Solved*, to be published next month. "If you visit a fresh one, you can see how the crops have been pressed down in a spiral or circular pattern, sometimes so gently that they have not even been flattened, sometimes pressed so firmly into the soil that they leave a mark in it. The traces left by humans are quite different."

But there are aspects to the circles which make them tempting subjects for science-fiction speculation. Witnesses who have been nearby when they form frequently speak of strange lights and buzzing noises, or sensations similar to those associated with strong fields of static electricity. Tests with instruments have sometimes confirmed that electric phenomena are involved.

The growing number of circles may be partly explicable by changes in agricultural practice, but it is impossible to account for the early systematic patterns of recent examples.

Fancy and superstition have ranged exuberantly in proposing explanations for the phenomenon. Claims that the cause involves flying saucers, fungal infections, ley-lines, giant hailstones, rutting stags or mass-movements of hedgehogs have been suggested, and gleefully perpetuated by those who thrive on mystification. This year, the bouillabaisse of red herrings has been enriched by a suggestion that the signs are a



Fields of investigation: a crop untouched by the circles (above left), and (above right) examples of the phenomena in Hampshire and Wiltshire this year.

warning of ecological disaster written in 3,000-year-old Sumerian script — although it has not been explained why an entity which has not yet discovered the ABC should be supposed to have any up to date information about other events on earth.

The mystifiers are less happy with the evidence of the small number of witnesses, including some impeccably sober citizens, who have actually observed the formation of circles. Their testimony threatens to spoil the fun. One of them is Melvyn Bell, a Wiltshire labourer, who saw a circle in 1983, long before the story was taken up by the tabloids.

"It didn't seem a matter of great interest to me at the time," he says. "I was riding on the old Ridgeway near Lavington at about eight in the evening one day in August. About a quarter of a mile away I saw a small cloud of dust

above a cornfield — it looked like one of those spinning clouds of debris you sometimes see outside a supermarket. I was looking down the hill towards it, higher up than the top of the cloud. It was all over in a few seconds. It laid out a circle about ten yards wide in the corn. I heard no buzzing noises."

Of all explanations, the whirlwind solution is the one that commentators draw to occult answers dislike most. Mr Andrews mentions it briefly and dismissively in his own book, *Circular Evidence*, written jointly with Pat Delgado and published last year. Supernaturalists have suggested that Mr Bell's evidence should be discounted because he is an employee of Dr Terence Meaden, an academic specialising in research into atmospheric processes, whose book *The Circles Effect and its Mysteries*, also published last year (there must be

a supernatural explanation behind this exponential growth in the number of books on the subject).

Dr Meaden is the first writer to put forward a theory which explains most of the characteristics of the circles on a basis of current scientific knowledge. In the process, he goes far to providing a rational explanation for many of the UFO reports which have puzzled researchers for decades. Drawing partly on the extensive records gathered by Mr Andrews and his colleagues, he shows that circles tend to appear in very specific conditions of weather and topography.

"I would say there is no mystery about the basic process," he says. "The primary thing is a vortex formed on the lee side of a hill in very still atmospheric conditions. If a mass of air near the ground becomes electrically charged, as it can be by friction where a dry crop

and dust have been stirred by the wind all day, very complex processes might develop, and produce the buzzing and glowing that have been described."

In their familiar form, whirlwinds happen only in daylight, when warm air creates upcurrents which spin as they rise. But where a layer of cool air lies above a warm layer, parts of the upper layer can fall away, and as they sink, spiral formations like smoke-rings may form.

These spinning masses, some larger than others, some hitting the ground quite hard, and others scarcely brushing it, might well be the most credible explanation for many of the detailed characteristics of the circles, including the delicate concentric forms sometimes seen. It is more difficult to understand how they could produce treble and quintuple patterns of rings, and harder still to see how

they could lead to the complex angular, spurs and key-patterns photographed this year.

"Imagine a round clock falling to the ground," Dr Meaden says. "If it falls neatly, it may leave a plain round impression behind. If it falls so hard that it smashes, then parts of the mechanism might shoot out this way or that. Further vortices inside the main vortex might fly out as it disintegrates. I think many of these patterns are genuine, and offer clues to the internal structure of these objects."

But not even Dr Meaden can offer a clear explanation for the apparent tendency of the patterns to grow more complex year by year. If that trend continues, a degree of mystery will continue to cling to the circles, and it may not be long before it seems worthwhile for us to brush up on our Sumerian.

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Fine days for superwardens

MOTORISTS who have grown accustomed to flouting London's parking regulations with impunity could soon confront an unprecedented assault on illegally parked vehicles.

"Super" traffic wardens will enforce parking prohibitions along London's proposed priority red route network, and a new breed of parking control officer is to concentrate on areas where parking is permitted in the suburbs. At the same time there will be new methods of enforcing payment.

London's local authorities are considering following the example set by their counterparts in New York, Washington and Los Angeles, where mobile "hit squads" find motorists who repeatedly violate parking regulations, and then avoid the fine.

Armed with access to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre computer in Swansea, local authorities will be able to easily identify consistent offenders. Clamp units will then be dispatched in search of their vehicles, which will remain immobilised until all previous fines have been paid.

The tactics are long overdue. Despite annual increases in the number of fixed penalty notices issued for parking-related offences — there were more than two million notices last year — an estimated 350,000 vehicles are parked illegally in central London every day. According to Nick Lestor, the planning and transport officer of the Labour-controlled Association of London Authorities (ALA), the increase in vehicle ownership has been accompanied by a similar increase in the number of parking violations. "There are three illegally parked vehicles for every one legally parked," he said. The 1982 report by the

Ignoring fixed penalty notices could soon spell doom for London's illegal parkers



A sight to chill the blood?: a London warden at work

select committee on traffic in London called for an increase in the recommended number of traffic wardens from 1,800 to 4,000. But the money was never provided, and the traffic warden service is now facing an almost impossible task with only 1,300 officers.

During the past 12 months, however, a variety of influential organisations, such as the Confederation of British Industry and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, have called for solutions to London's transport problems, forcing the government to take action.

In December, Cecil Parkinson, the transport secretary, unveiled proposals for a

300-mile network of priority red routes, designed to get London's traffic moving again. Earlier this week, Mr Parkinson outlined a series of detailed suggestions for implementing the red route scheme, including an overhaul of the capital's traffic and parking regulations.

Discussions are still in progress over the details of the initiative between the transport department, the Home Office, the Metropolitan Police, the ALA and the Conservative-controlled London Boroughs Association, but the broad outlines are apparent.

Once the legislation needed to introduce the red route

scheme receives royal assent, possibly in 1992, traffic wardens will be responsible for enforcing parking prohibitions on the red route and double yellow line network.

Their powers will be enhanced, enabling them to authorise wheel-clamping and car removals. At present, only the police have the authority to clamp and remove.

In addition, a sliding scale of fines (possibly from £150 to £400) will be introduced, aimed at providing different levels of deterrence for different levels of offence. The legislation will also de-criminalise parking violations in permissible parking zones, such as meter and residents' bays. Local authorities will be empowered to deploy parking enforcement officers, financed by receipts from parking fines, who will be able to issue fixed penalty notices, clamp and remove vehicles and chase up offenders.

Transport officials are still undecided over what to do with single yellow lines, prohibiting parking at certain times while permitting it at others. There is, however, pressure for their enforcement to be handed over to local authorities.

Although most motorists still do not understand the economic and social consequences of illegal parking, Mr Lestor believes that attitudes are slowly changing. Effective enforcement, accompanied by an increase in the number of legal parking spaces, should help to accelerate that change. And, with the mobile hit squads on the streets, Mr Lestor is confident that increased fines for violations in areas of permissible parking will not be necessary. Motorists will, for the first time, face the near certainty of being caught.

MICHAEL DYNES

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LET IT THROUGH THE TIMES



hands of flesh: with we be

Flesh

Phantom swarming on the

penal in Beaumont

was pleaded to be allowed

to say their regulations

to say their regulations

to say their regulations

to say their regulations

to say their regulations

to say their regulations

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to say their regulations

Should those other than the perfectly formed be quite so keen to bare all when the sun shines?



Pounds of flesh: will we be seeing more of men's knees at work and play as Britain heats up? And should we be seeing less of women's bosoms?

Flesh perhaps too willing

Policemen sweltering on beach patrol in Bournemouth this week pleaded to be allowed to swap their regulation issue trousers for navy shorts. Their request was turned down with a touch of postcard humour: "Where would they put their trunks?" a senior officer said.

Elsewhere a more po-faced Post Office manager threatened mailmen in Herefordshire with the sack if they defied a ban on Bermudas. Such dress, pronounced an executive, "is not part of the Royal Mail image".

The nation, it seems, is not ready for the male knee. According to Anthony Edwards, a spokesman for the British Clothing Industry Association, it is all a question of credibility. "A policeman in shorts would not be taken seriously, because he looks as if he is having fun. Men dress not to attract physically, but to attract through the uniform of their profession. They're saying they earn and are successful, in a position of power rather than through manual labour."

"There have been attempts by designers to introduce shorts for formal wear, but the problem always is - what do you do with the rest of the leg? If you have long socks and formal shoes you defeat the object, and you can also make yourself look a complete idiot. If you have sandals, it's no longer formal."

John Taylor, the editor of the magazine *British Style*, thinks the problem lies with the knee - "one of the uglier parts of the body". Shorts must be at least four or five inches above it, he believes, and socks no higher than mid-calf - "otherwise you concentrate attention on the knee."

Mr Taylor draws a distinction between what he calls the "sauce-culotte of street wear, those huge baggy things made of cheap material" and something more businesslike,

which may possibly have a future if the British climate becomes substantially warmer. "At the moment, though, I don't think so."

Dress standards at work vary enormously. Shorts would be unthinkable, it seems, at the Stock Exchange, where a spokeswoman confirms: "I have certainly never seen any. Of course it is up to individual member firms, but I don't think they would be considered appropriate." In the Civil Service, however, the code seems considerably more relaxed. A spokesman says: "Contrary to popular myth we don't go around in bowler hats carrying umbrellas. Staff must inspire confidence, but if shorts fit the bill it wouldn't be against any rules to wear them."

The job itself may determine acceptability. At the BBC a senior personnel officer comments: "You won't find our commissioners in full uniform above and below, but it might be different in a recording studio or filming on location in a heatwave. We try to take a common-sense approach."

The Navy seems to have it all worked out: "tropical rig" features white shirts, white shorts, white shoes and white socks. Unfortunately, it can only be worn in designated "tropical" areas - and Britain, whatever the temperature, is not one of them.

The problem seems to lie not so much with the male leg but with its bareness, says Lou Taylor, the principal lecturer in dress history at Brighton Polytechnic. "Men's legs have frequently been on display, in doublet and hose and knee breeches. It seems to be bare flesh that we regard as offensive," she says, "particularly in unexpected places. Then we think it's really rude."

LIZ GILL

At a formal dinner last week, held on one of the hottest nights of the year, a number of high-achieving, middle-aged career women who should have known better were wearing suntops and inflating bare, wrinkled, untanned upper bodies on the rest of the guests. As temperatures soar, standards of dress seem to slip.

Everywhere you go at the moment, you are liable to be confronted by the anaesthetic spectacle of vast amounts of wobbly white flesh. At one time such sights were thankfully confined to beaches and holiday resorts, but now nearly naked bodies can be seen in every high street, supermarket and park.

The same women who, in the winter, would die of embarrassment if the milkman or postman caught them in their underwear, are now openly sunning themselves in tiny bikinis in all kinds of public places - lawns, roadsides, and outside pubs and restaurants. They are going shopping in skimpy black suntops and too-tight shorts. They are sitting in airports dressed as if they were already on the beach. They are going to work in backless see-through dresses with nothing underneath. Women who spend all winter staring in disgust at their acres of cellulite are now putting them on display.

It is not just women who fall prey to the urge to bare all. Men, too, are walking down high streets and drinking in pubs exposing their pallid chests and bulging beer bellies. It seems that every year our tolerance for bare flesh increases. At one time, anybody who walked down a public highway wearing a bra top and shorts would risk being cautioned for causing a public nuisance. Now, nobody says a word.

Why do we rush to reveal the flesh which, for most of the year, we are only too thankful to hide? It cannot be

because we want to get brown. The nearest thing most Anglo-Saxon skins will get to a tan during this current heatwave is redness, sunburn and peeling, which looks even worse, if possible, than lumpy white mottled flesh.

We can't be exposing ourselves because our bare flesh looks good. The merest glance in the mirror would confirm the opposite. And it's not as if the vast majority of us have spent the cold months honing and polishing our bodies. And we certainly can't be baring almost all because it's more comfortable that way. Quite the reverse. There can be few things more painful than sunburnt flesh sticking to hot, plastic seats. The strong midday sun on a bare back will result only in painful and possibly dangerous sunburn, especially for skin that is not used to such exposure.

Nor can we be stripping off in order to keep cool. The best way to stay cool in a heatwave is to wear a sun hat and very loose, light, cotton clothes. The most popular garments - if one can call them that - worn by the British in a heatwave seem to be tiny bands of black nylon or Lycra, fabrics which maximise sweatiness and discomfort.

The only possible explanation for the exposure, as I see it, must be that the hot sun acts as a mood-altering drug on Anglo-Saxon brains, changing our perception to the extent that we no longer see ourselves as others see us, or as we really are. In our heat-crazed fantasy, we imagine we are slim, sensuous, bronzed nymphs, or handsome, muscle-bound hunks.

While I cannot wish for this present hot weather to end, I would appreciate not having so much flesh so unadvisedly displayed.

LIZ HODGKINSON

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To see ourselves as others would see us

DO YOU remember the marvellous Julie Christie film *Darling*? In preparation for my summer reading I purchased the Penguin edition of Anton Chekhov's short stories and, unable to wait for the beach, turned to re-read the short story on which that film was based. The thought is delectable, I know, but I've always worried that I may come perilously close to resembling Chekhov's "The Darling".

The heroine, Olga, is widowed twice and has one love affair. What intrigues Chekhov is how passionately Olga assumes both the ideas and the ambience of the men she loves. The first husband, Kuklin, runs an outdoor theatre in the Tivoli amusement park. Soon, Chekhov tells us, "Olga was telling friends that the theatre was the most remarkable, the most important and the most necessary thing in the world, and that it was only in the theatre that one could obtain true enjoyment and become truly educated and humane".

Kuklin dies suddenly and the next husband is the manager of a timber yard. Now it seems to Olga that "the most important and necessary thing in life was timber, and there was something deeply familiar and touching to her in the sound of the words beam, block, board, balk, plank, slab, scantling, battens, slabs...". Soon both Olga and her husband smell of genitality and the ubiquitous sulphur soap of the local baths. "Oh, we're very happy, thank God," Olga would say to her acquaintances. "God grant everyone such a life!"

Well, yes. I suppose all women assume, to some extent, certain of their menfolk's values, or else keep very quiet. This, after all, is what pair-bonding is about. In my case, it takes a slightly different turn, though no less thorough. I seem utterly impermeable to the influence of gentlemen companions in the realm of ideas, but putty when it comes to their views on my appearance.

"I adore blondes," a man I respected enormously told me, and later that day, after a perfectly agonising time at Sak's Fifth Avenue beauty salon in New York, I emerged from the hairdresser with waist-length blonde hair. The sole benefit of that experience was to discover that every word I said was now considered by the tout monde to be much cleverer than before. No one expects much of women with waist-length blonde hair, and the simple ability to construct a sentence with subject, verb and predicate is greeted with awe.

What followed was predictable. "You simply are too colonial and dreary in your wardrobe," said a male friend whose thoughts on Goethe struck me as brilliant, and by the end of the same week I had given the beige, brown and grey suits to a second-hand shop and could be seen poking about looking at spangled



BARBARA AMIEL

things in dress shops with names like Whistles and A la Mode.

Now the height of this lunacy is in full flower. My former husband, whose business acumen constantly amazes me, told me to "get yourself fit", as if a person such as me, who weighs less than nine stone and has to stoop in rooms with ceilings close to six feet, should have to worry about diet and exercise. All the same, my fridge is full of beastly looking things with sprouts, roots and leaves. The chocolate biscuits have gone and so has the nice refined white sugar I love.

"You really ought to concentrate more on press-ups and stretching exercises," said a very helpful person I was interviewing for a column on the pros and cons of regulation in the financial markets, as I declined caffeinated coffee with a murmur about health. That weekend I took out my

can't bear the idea of listening to people discuss chocolate biscuits in terms of an addiction. There is nothing wrong about chocolate or spiritual about lettuce. The words are out of place in that context. But the thought that I might enjoy cream and butter rather than yoghurt and skimmed milk seems to shock my contemporary friends in about the same way a religious heresy could shake a medieval theologian.

I'm tempted to remind such people, including the Edwina Curries of our lives, that they are simply in the grip of a fashion, just as their forbears were. Medical science in the Victorian era, after all, considered self-abuse to be not only a sure sign of moral insanity but the basic cause of most physical ailments, just as, today, caffeine and cholesterol are singled out.

These ideas may not be entirely wrong in either example, but I am increasingly convinced that the fervour with which they are advanced has less to do with science than it does with fashion.

Obviously, the time has come to return to Rubenesque ideals, when being soft and flabby indicated wealth and accomplishment and was a sure sign that one had servants to do most of the chores and leisure time to spare. Human beings are created in many different shapes, and mine seems to be one without calf muscles or biceps. After a month of trying, I simply cannot imagine that it is either healthy or the will of the Creator that I should change my outline. It is perfectly true that exercise occasionally gives me a euphoric feeling (generally when, like writing, it is finished), which I am told is the result of sustained physical exertion releasing certain chemicals in my brain. This may well be considerably cheaper than the chemical highs purchased by more conventional addicts. But coming down from exercising is extremely depressing. As my trainer sadly remarked, after I failed to appear at his machines for two weeks: "You lose that tone really fast if you skip your workouts."

At the bottom of all this lunacy must be the age-old female fear of losing one's looks and, of course, of old age and death. These are legitimate fears, but I suspect they must be faced sooner rather than later. We do seem to be the first generation hellbent on dying in perfectly good health, and while that may not be a bad approach to mortality, it does tend to abstract one from the very real need to deal with the spiritual consequences of decline and decay.

Which is why I shall go on holiday next week and do nothing more energetic than turn the pages of Chekhov's stories, remarking once again on how his laborious act of putting pen to paper gives one more strength and insight into dealing with the inevitable than all the health clubs of the world.

We seem to be the first generation hellbent on dying in perfectly good health

fourth membership in a health club.

My problem is evident - and evidence, I think - of a terminal case of female insecurity. All the same, the health club, which sits on top of the Hyatt Carlton Towers, in London, is rather fun in a gory sort of way. I do my press-ups while watching Sebastian Coe run on a treadmill, to the accompaniment of three photographers and a gaggle of starstruck things in shiny Lycra.

My trainer is full of extraordinary insights into the human body, such as the current wisdom that the way to tell if a woman has had a breast implant is to ask her to sit close to the fire. "If she won't go near it, you know," he said wisely. That sounded like a perfectly horrid bit of men's locker-room lore, but could it be true? As for the effect of all this exercising, well, at night I can barely walk and in the day I am too tired to write.

Personally, I think I'm about ready to give the heave-ho to this western preoccupation with the shape and condition of one's body. I

Who should minister to women's needs?

In her government reshuffle this week Mrs Thatcher gave Angela Rumbold the job of championing women's issues. Without proper resources, is it any more than a gesture?



Shared goal, different views: Angela Rumbold (left), John Patten, Jo Richardson

Shifts in voting patterns tend to concentrate politicians' minds wonderfully. Hence, Rosemary Deem believes, the flurry of Conservative interest in women's issues after the last election.

"It was then that they realised their votes could no longer be taken for granted," says Ms Deem, a senior lecturer at the Open University and an expert in women's studies. "Previously women in general, and middle-class women in particular, had been more likely to vote Conservative than men, and the party had felt no particular need to woo them. But those patterns began to break down in 1987."

"There were also a lot of ideas coming from women's organisations, which one would not normally think of as radical, but which recognised the changes in women's lives and some political attention paid to them."

The result was the setting up of the ministerial group on women's issues, under the chairmanship of John Patten, the Home Office minister, which would meet two or three times a year. The group came under the spotlight again this week, when Angela Rumbold moved from education to the Home Office and took over the chairmanship.

Critics of the system maintain that such moves are mere window dressing and that without specialised staff and its own resources - any projects are financed by the relevant department - the group remains little more than a gesture.

Mr Patten, however, is said to be proud of the group's achievements, which are listed by the Home Office as follows: One of its first decisions was to send a Home Office circular to all government departments to ensure that policy drafters always took account of equal opportunities in drawing up green papers, white papers or any other policy documents.

It pushed for more women

to be placed in public appointments and urged women themselves to come forward. In April 1989 it announced a five-point plan to improve childcare provision, including amendments to the Children Bill to modernise local authority registration procedures for childcare facilities, instituting annual inspections and revoking registration where necessary (the amendments were accepted), a Home Office scheme to advise on quality and standards of private nurseries (this is in force), encouraging the use of school premises for after-school and holiday play schemes (the take-up rate is not yet collated); financial support for some voluntary sector

childcare schemes (in force); and urging employers to use various tax reliefs available to set up workplace nurseries (take-up rate not yet assessed). The group's other main concern has been in the field of domestic violence, and new guidelines to the police on how to tackle the problem will be issued next week. It has also set in motion legal studies to examine how criminal and civil law might be improved in this area, and funded local initiatives under the "Safer Cities" scheme.

A Home Office spokesman says: "Projects are financed through the department concerned. The purpose of the group is to bring together the various strands of government

and to be able to look at the issues affecting women as a whole." Despite these advances the group retains a relatively low profile, a reflection, perhaps, of the unease among Conservatives over the whole notion of "women's issues". The unease is partly philosophical (many believe that the role of women is not a matter for legislation or state intervention), and partly practical. Some observers believe attempts to go further would founder on the rocks of Mrs Thatcher's fears of a "crèche society".

The Labour Opposition maintains that ministerial groups are ultimately ineffective. They propose a women's minister with cabinet status -

Jo Richardson currently holds the shadow post - backed up by a "small but effective department" with its own staff and spending power.

Labour, which has studied similar ministries in France, New Zealand and Australia, would also create a network of regional offices to give women access at local level. It places tougher laws on sex discrimination and equal pay among its legislative priorities, plus action on childcare, employment rights and community support for carers.

Although Ms Richardson has been active in issues of particular interest to women, among them the abortion and embryo research debates and, most recently, the suggested legislation for warnings on tampon packets in the wake of the toxic shock syndrome scare, her role to date has been spent entirely in Opposition. Labour's plan remains as yet untested.

There are those, of course, to whom the whole idea of special ministerial groups for women is anathema. But even feminists are divided: many believe that whatever the motive, it still marginalises women's concerns.

Ms Deem does not agree. "I don't think it is demeaning. You must have someone with the commitment and expertise who can monitor and evaluate what is being done."

"I think a minister is better than a ministerial group because, although she would still have to fight for her budget with every other department, she would have more status and impact. In the end, though, you are only as strong as your money and resources, and a lot of changes will need money."

"It may be that demographic shifts and the economy will force changes. The trouble with leaving it to those forces is that, when you get a recession, women's gains tend to disappear."

LIZ GILL

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More than academic interest



Teacher, says
of storytelling as

BOB GANNON

Patrick Deuchar, chief executive of the Royal Albert Hall, reveals to Simon Tait his plans to transform the commercial fortunes of the Kensington landmark

The box office has become the £250,000 "ticket shop" with a new telephone system — 30 lines instead of

Deuchar's ambitions for the old place are unlimited. He wants to bring back the

John Higgins, who was one of the judges in Vienna at the annual contest for operatic singers, reports that this year's entries reflected the political changes in Eastern Europe

In this final round, with only 12 singers left, there was no representative from the five countries which might claim a little operatic tradition between them: Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Austria itself. Yes, the face of opera is changing.



"There's nothing more exciting than telling stories," says Jan Blake. "You're a barometer for your audience, you push them and yourself, conjuring up images and expressing yourself creatively through stories. You just can't stop." So addictive are the magical words — "once upon a time" —

● **The Birmingham Storytelling Festival** runs from today until Sunday. Storytelling (in tents) takes place on Saturday and Sunday from 1pm-6pm in Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston. The other sessions are held at the Midland Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, tonight at 7.30pm; on Saturday at 2.30pm, 6pm and 7.30pm; and on Sunday at 6pm and 7.30pm. Bookings can be made on 021 440 3838.



One of the most curious aspects of the hall is its seat-debenture system. The Commissioners of 1851 own the hall's freehold, which they lease to the corporation for 5p a year, but 350 seat-holders own 1,300 of the seats. Deuchar is working on a scheme to ensure that the seats are never empty, "so promoters don't feel they're playing to three-quarter

The only merchandise available for purchase at the moment is a postcard, but the old giant is preparing to be hoist to record shops, bookshops, leisurewear shops, leather-goods shops and foyer entertainers. "This place was treated like a monument, not given enough impetus to show us its potential. Too many things were considered impossible to do. We've found out that they were possible, just difficult. We'll listen to any promoter's ideas. We have a duty not only to return the Albert Hall to its previous grandeur, but also to bring it to life."

A black and white illustration featuring a large, ornate chair with a hand reaching out from the backrest. In the background, a city skyline is visible, and a small, winged figure is peeking out from behind a chest.

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Free market is near, says Gorbachev

FROM REUTERS IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Gorbachev said yesterday that the Soviet Union could lay the foundations for a market economy in two years with Western help. Speaking at a joint news conference after talks with Giulio Andreotti, the visiting Italian prime minister, Mr Gorbachev said Western credit would help the importation of crucial raw materials and would develop the country's own free-market industrial potential.

"In these next two years, when we face especially difficult changes, we need this help," the Soviet leader said. "None the less, we hope that after two years thorough work we could introduce a strong market mechanism. Of course we still have a lot to do if we are to achieve this."

He said the Soviet food industry and light industry, producing consumer goods neglected under old-style communism, might soon show signs of improvement. Signor Andreotti said the success of perestroika was vital for European security. The West, must provide concrete help. He gave no details of co-operation agreements, but said the two sides had decided to confer in August about possible economic aid. Foreign ministers would then meet in October to discuss putting plans into action.

President Gorbachev said:

Soviet harvest, page 9

New submarine may be scrapped

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

PLANS for a quieter and faster nuclear-powered submarine for the Royal Navy might now be in doubt because of the government's "options for change" cuts and renewed objections from the Treasury over the cost of such a programme.

Lord Chalfont, chairman of Vickers Shipbuilders, said yesterday he believed that the chance of building a new submarine, the SSN20, to replace the Trafalgar class, might have vanished. Although this was disputed by the Royal Navy yesterday, the future of the SSN20 appeared to rest in the hands of the Treasury.

Even before the announcement this week of a proposed cut in the submarine force from 27 to 16, the defence ministry and the Treasury had been involved in intense negotiations over the planned development of a new class of nuclear-powered submarine.

The Trafalgar class, with its special propeller system, is already one of the quietest in the world. There are six in service and another, HMS Triumph, is being built at Vickers's yard at Barrow-in-Furness, in Cumbria. There are no more orders for Trafalgar class boats.

Tom King, the defence secretary, has made it clear that a decision on further orders for submarines will be announced in due course. However, Vickers, at present the sole submarine builder, said that the company wanted talks with the defence ministry to find out what was being planned. One option appears to be to delay any development of a new class of nuclear-powered submarine until the late 1990s but the Treasury is expected to take the lead in trying to kill off the programme.

Complex decisions, page 2



Crowds gathering to watch the convoy of chemical weapons roll slowly through Clausen on its way to the Pacific

US chemical arsenal on the move

FROM IAN MURRAY IN BONN

THE first 3,500 of America's European arsenal of 102,000 deadly chemical artillery shells safely made the first part of their journey to eventual destruction on a Pacific atoll yesterday. Guarded by 1,200 police, the VX nerve gas was taken in a five-mile-long convoy from Clausen near Kaiserslautern to another US depot at the railroad 30 miles away at Miesau.

There it will wait in its airtight steel containers until the other shells, some containing Sarin, arrive. They will be loaded on trains which will take them 300 miles to Nordenham on the North

Sea for shipment on board two US Navy vessels to the Pacific.

The operation went off without a hitch. The first of 80 vehicles left Clausen at 8 am as planned and the last arrived at Miesau two hours and 33 minutes later, only three minutes later than expected. The escort vehicles included two armoured lorries carrying sensors capable of detecting any leak instantly, but so confident were people along the route of the safety precautions that they turned out to watch the convoy roll slowly past.

General Dennis Benchoff, who was in charge of the operation, said proudly afterwards: "I believe that a piece of

German history has been written today." Rudi Geil, the Rheinland-Pfalz interior minister, responsible for liaison between the American and West German authorities, said he was "a bit relieved" it had all gone off so well.

A last-minute legal attempt to stop the first transfer failed on Wednesday afternoon when the court in Miesau rejected an appeal against an earlier judgement in Cologne ruling that the convoy was safe. Frau Angelika Beer, security spokeswoman for the Greens, yesterday regretted the decision.

Johnston Atoll, page 9

Political sketch

Words of wisdom from a silent star

Lo, he speaks! When a man had been silent for as long as

Tristan Garel-Jones (C. Watford) doubt arises as to whether he can. Yesterday, after eight years, he did.

What historians will record as Mr Garel-Jones's "trap-pist period" began during the Hairdressing (Consumer Protection) Bill debate, on 28 May, 1982. Watford is not famous for his hairdressers. Garel-Jones's hair is short, dark and severely cropped. So was his speech, recorded for all time in the Official Record.

"I beg leave to ask to withdraw the motion." Experts knew immediately what that meant. It had nothing to do with hairdressers. It meant that the member for Watford had been recruited as a government whip.

It was a merciful release. Mr Garel-Jones was elected in 1979, and as we comb through the Hansard records for 1979-82—or what historians will dub his "damp patch"—we encounter a soul in turmoil.

November 19, 1981, for example: Donald Stewart, then MP for the Western Isles, was speaking.

"Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Watford) rose—

Mr Stewart: I am not giving way—his intervention is a piece of impertinence.

Garel-Jones rose— (Mr Stewart ignored him)

Garel-Jones: Will the hon gentleman give way?

Stewart: No. (He spoke on)

Garel-Jones: Will the hon gentleman give way?

Stewart: I shall not give way to the hon gentleman.

Garel-Jones: Will the hon gentleman give way?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Weatherill): Order! I thought I heard him say he would not.

Stewart: I hope the message is beginning to get through.

At first neither this nor other messages did, yet

through, Watford had gasped as his MP warned the House

(on 28 October 1981) that the Tories allow "unemployment to undermine social justice" and "be accused of having cold hearts dressed up as economic logic." He had also suggested that Tories would "do themselves a service by spending less time on contentious legislation."

On 3 December he insisted

not accept being part of a second track in Europe.

Mr Kaufman said the British government was seen as the most reactionary in the EC, Nato and the whole of Europe, including the newly liberated nations. Labour was identified as the party that believed in Europe at a time when voters were increasingly believing in Europe.

Matthew Parris

Johnston Atoll, page 9

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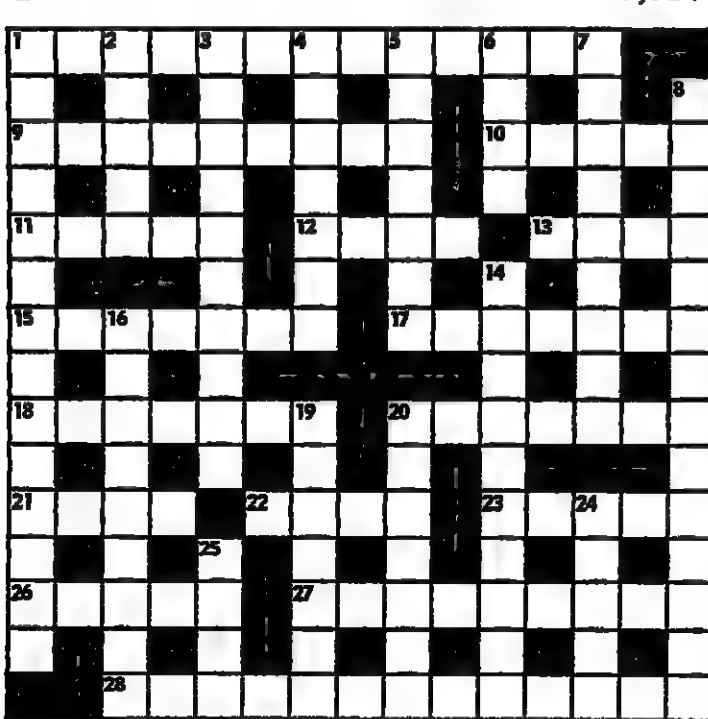
Complex decisions, page 2

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Complex decisions, page 2

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 18,357



ACROSS

- 1 Declare it is no different for artistic type (13).
- 9 Put on an expensive film (4-5).
- 10 About to perform again piece of church music (5).
- 11 President's study aid (5).
- 12 Fruit appears to lose freshness (4).
- 13 Conflict with maiden can become heated (4).
- 15 Avoid one on purpose (7).
- 17 There's a lot in report — I only use extract (7).
- 18 No partnership gets first all the time (3-4).
- 20 Irish quarter in European city (7).
- 21 Not a counterfeit coin (4).
- 22 Kiss for unromantic Miss (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 18,356



DOWN

- 1 Battle call that indicates one's plight (10,4).
- 2 President introduces a fast measure (5).
- 3 Speak at length about right to be resident abroad (10).
- 4 Deputy's grade reduced (5-2).
- 5 Minimal dance? (7).
- 6 Small island modern ruler doesn't need (4).
- 7 Medical type treats hip that's damaged (9).
- 8 Unexceptional choice of words associated with market (6,2,6).
- 14 Rulers with impressive fists (5,5).
- 16 Share somebody's burden, perhaps? (4,5).
- 19 Expert on pipes and piano to impose upon (7).
- 20 Lost girl is left inside (7).
- 24 Harmonize with hymn, say, in church (5).
- 25 Clothes one needs to change fairly often (4).

Concise Crossword, page 15

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

HISTORICALS

- GORHAM**
- a. A Roundhead general
 - b. A religious controversy
 - c. The assassin of Spencer Perceval
- PICARIES**
- a. French mercenaries
 - b. Professional auditors
 - c. Hundred Years War battle
- SHAKI ELECTION**
- a. British general election
 - b. Conspiration
 - c. Army reorganisation
- THE NOTABLES**
- a. French senators
 - b. Members of the Royal Society
 - c. The Royal Highlanders

Answers on page 20

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 - e. M-ways/roads M23-M4 735
 - f. M25 London Orbital only 736
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 - c. Wales 739
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WEATHER

Much of England and Wales will start dry with some sunshine. Showers will, however, spread north-east during the day. The rain will be heaviest in the west, whereas eastern parts will be mainly dry with just a chance of a shower in the evening. Northern Ireland and western Scotland, dry and bright at first, will have showers later. Outlook: cloudy with scattered showers; becoming drier and brighter.

ABROAD

MONDAY: 1-hourly; 2-hourly; 3-hourly; 4-hourly; 5-hourly; 6-hourly; 7-hourly; 8-hourly; 9-hourly; 10-hourly; 11-hourly; 12-hourly; 13-hourly; 14-hourly; 15-hourly; 16-hourly; 17-hourly; 18-hourly; 19-hourly; 20-hourly; 21-hourly; 22-hourly; 23-hourly; 24-hourly																										
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BUSINESS

FRIDAY JULY 27 1990

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Property group suffers £69m loss

MOUNTLEIGH, the property group where American entrepreneurs Nelson Peltz and Peter May took a near-23 per cent controlling stake in November, has undertaken a comprehensive financial clear-out, leaving it with a net loss of £69.8 million for the year ended April, against a £31.3 million profit last time.

A £56.1 million write-down on Mountleigh's property portfolio and the £19.8 million cost of restructuring Galerías Preciados, the Spanish retailer, have been included as exceptional items. A further £14.9 million, relating to losses on the sale of subsidiaries, and the stake in Storehouse have been taken below the line.

Shareholders will collect a final dividend of 3.5p, making 4.75p for the year, the same as before. The group still has borrowings of £600 million and gearing of 95 per cent.

Tempos, page 25

Herrington ban

Fimbra, the financial intermediaries, managers and brokers regulatory association, has issued an urgent suspension order against a firm of intermediaries in Kent. Herrington Investment Services of Dartford, was ordered to cease investment business with effect from 9am yesterday morning.

Douglas gains

Robert M Douglas, the building, civil engineering and construction equipment group, has raised its dividend 62 per cent to 10.5p, with a 7.5p final, for the year to end-March. Taxable profits rose 39 per cent to £12.39 million on turnover of £327 million, up 25 per cent. Eps rose 22 per cent to 47.5p.

Tempos, page 25

Smith falls

David S Smith (Holdings), the paper and packaging company, suffered a 20 per cent drop in pre-tax profits to £26.4 million on sales of £363.7 million for the year to end-April. A final dividend of 6.5p makes 9.25p for the year, a rise of 5.7 per cent.

Tempos, page 25

THE POUND

US dollar 1.8115 (+0.0020)
W German mark 2.9442 (+0.0114)
Exchange index 93.1 (+0.2)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1851.5 (-14.2)
FT-SE 100 2344.1 (-20.6)
New York Dow Jones 2927.72 (-3.22)
Tokyo Nikkei Avg 31369.75 (-331.52)
Closing Prices ... Page 27

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base 15%
3-month Interbank 15.14%
3-month eligible bills 14.4-14.1%
US: Prime Rate 10%
Federal Funds 8%
3-month Treasury Bills 7.55-7.55%
30-year bonds 102.1-102.2

CURRENCIES

London: New York: £/\$ 1.8115
E. DM/\$ 2.9442
S. DM/\$ 2.9442
E. ¥/\$ 160.90
S. ¥/\$ 160.90
E. ¥/\$ 160.90
S. ¥/\$ 160.90
E. ¥/\$ 160.90
S. ¥/\$ 160.90

GOLD

London Fixing: AM \$370.60 pm \$368.75
close \$368.25-368.75 (£203.00-203.50)
New York: COMEX \$368.70-369.20

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Aug) ... \$18.90/bbl (\$19.15)
Denotes latest trading price

TOURIST RATES

Bank Bank
Australia \$ 2.27 2.27
Austria S 21.45 20.15
Belgium F 63.30 69.30
Canada C 1.17 1.05
Denmark Kr 11.68 10.98
Finland F 10.25 9.85
France F 6.55 6.25
Germany DM 3.05 2.85
Greece Dr 13.74 12.74
Hong Kong \$ 1.46 1.37
Ireland P 1.48 1.37
Japan Yen 160.90 160.90
Netherlands Gld 2.27 2.27
Norway Kr 11.68 10.98
Portugal Esc 208 208
South Africa R 5.87 5.87
Sweden Kr 11.11 10.51
Switzerland F 2.27 2.27
Turkey Lira 1.85 1.79
USA \$ 1.81 1.81
Yugoslavia Dnr 25.00 19.00

Rates for small denomination bank notes as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Denotes latest trading price. Retail Price Index: 126.7 (June)

Shares plunge as half-time profits fall 21% to £733m

ICI stops making fertiliser

By DEREK HARRIS, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

ICI is leaving the loss-making fertiliser business by closing its plant at Billingham, Teesside, and selling the rest of its British interests to Kemira Oy, the Finnish company and Europe's second largest fertiliser producer after Norsk Hydro.

At the 35-acre Billingham site, 640 jobs are to go but the impact on workers will be cushioned through redeployment. ICI is setting aside £100 million to meet closure costs, including plant dismantling at Billingham. There are 540 ICI employees who will transfer to Kemira, mainly at plants in Severnside near Bristol and Leith near Edinburgh.

The sale involves less than 2 per cent of ICI assets, which means ICI will be receiving less than £100 million. Sir Denis Henderson, the ICI chairman, said negotiations over price had not been completed as the deal had only been agreed in principle.

He nevertheless admitted the sale price was likely to be less than the asset value of the plants being acquired. However, there are three allied businesses still to be sold. Sir Denis said: "With these additional transactions, we would expect to see something back. The net result would be a substantial cash positive inflow."

The other businesses are two merchanting operations, Scottish Agricultural Industries and BritAg Industries, and the liquid carbon dioxide manufacturing company, Dril-Kold cooling materials. At the Severnside plant Kemira is taking over advanced technology ammonia

production developed by ICI, which spent £60 million on the plant. ICI is retaining licensing rights.

Sir Gordon Borrie, director general of fair trading, is likely to scrutinise the deal, which will push Kemira's share of the British fertiliser market from 17 to an estimated 33 per cent. Norsk Hydro, which also has a production plant in Britain, has about 23 per cent.

Sir Denis said the business logic for ICI of quitting fertilisers was unanswerable. There had been losses for four years and every effort had been made to improve the business, including vigorous cost reduction as well as new technology.

"There is never a good time to sell a business that is not in good shape," ICI has no continental production and Sir Denis believes only companies with a full European presence will be sufficiently profitable in the longer term.

"This decision is another stage in our strategy of focusing our resources on businesses where we can be assured of good long-term profitable growth based on a strong international market position, a good track record and keen competitiveness."

ICI's worldwide fertiliser business turned from a £79 million profit in 1985 to a £17 million loss the following year, followed by break-even in 1987 and £11 million losses in 1988 and 1989. ICI has fertiliser manufacturers in Canada — also loss-making — and in India, Australia and Malaysia, which are all profitable. There are no plans to sell the fertiliser interests abroad, but the position is being "watched carefully". The British

operation is believed to account for about 40 per cent of the total ICI fertiliser business.

ICI sent shock waves through the City with a 21 per cent setback in interim pre-tax profits. The group also gave warning of tough times ahead (Colin Campbell writes).

The shares fell 65p to £10.40 in a turnover of 7.6 million shares. There was a knock-on effect depressing other chemical shares and market leaders and the FT-SE 100 index fell 20.6 to 2,344.1.

Sir Denis reported pre-tax profits in the six months to end-June down from £925 million last time to £733 million, on turnover up 3 per cent to £6.82 billion mainly because of currency movements.

For the first time since 1980, ICI is not raising the dividend. The interim payout stays at 21p a share, out of net earnings of 67.4p (82p).

"If ICI had felt any glimmer of hope or optimism, it would have put up on the interim dividend," said Jinty Price, chemicals analyst at BZW.

"We all thought ICI had been bumping along the bottom for the past six months. Clearly, the bottom has not yet been reached," she added.

Analysts now expect ICI merely to maintain this year's final dividend, though the company said a decision would be taken at year-end to reflect the outcome and the board's assessment at that time of prospects for 1991.

ICI would not be drawn on financial prospects. Sir Denis said: "This is not a time to give forecasts..."

Comment, page 25

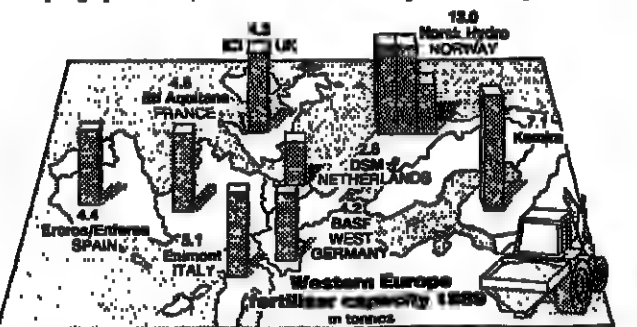


Sir Denis Henderson of ICI announcing the sale to Kemira of the UK fertiliser interests

Nightmare facing Europe's artificial manure makers

By WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU

THE European fertiliser market is a producers' nightmare. Dogged by declining demand, overcapacity and widespread dumping practices, it offers



little attraction for medium-sized producers, such as ICI, whose total capacity last year was 4.3 million tonnes, compared with Norsk Hydro's 13 million tonnes.

Last year, European demand for fertilisers decreased by 1 per cent, a trend that is likely to continue until the end of the decade, according to the European Fertiliser Manufacturers' Association, the umbrella organisation based in Brussels.

The downturn in demand is because of a European Commission-induced initiative to set aside land, as well as a result of changing farming practices. Farmers have been using fertilisers more sparingly and efficiently; this trend will accelerate after moves by the commission to reduce nitrate levels in water, mainly caused by fertilisers.

Under the scheme, farmers would either be forced, or induced through grants, to reduce the amounts of fertilisers they use.

Increasing environmental awareness has changed the reputation of artificial fertilisers from that of benefactors to bogymen.

Falling demand is one of the factors to have caused overcapacity in the European industry. Mistaken judgments on the part of an industry that has been building up capacity is another.

One example is BASF, the West German chemical group and another middle ranking player. BASF has decided to increase its exposure to the

business, building a plant in Belgium.

The third problem for the industry is the opening of Eastern Europe. The European Commission has tried to fight dumping practices from Eastern European suppliers by putting up quotas to protect West Europe's industry.

In Britain, the price per tonne of fertiliser is £118, but Bulgarian suppliers offer the same quantity for £108. Even the £118 amounts to no more than the prices prevailing in 1985.

Soon, some Eastern European countries will have gained associated EC status, others will become full EC

members, and the remaining quotas and restrictions will disappear. The result will be more competition, greater overcapacity, and perhaps even lower prices.

The Western European companies can answer this only by further consolidation. Among the middle ranking producers, Fisons recognised this eight years ago. ICI has recognised this now, but others, such as Hoechst, the West German chemicals firm, might follow.

Norsk Hydro, Kemira, and perhaps BASF, will emerge as the three dominant groups in Europe. The rest will be taken over, shrink further or disappear altogether.

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BP raises price with a warning

By MARTIN BARROW

BP has given warning that petrol prices may rise further if the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) succeeds in agreeing new quotas that will force up the price of crude oil.

The warning came as BP, Shell and Texaco confirmed 5.5p increases on all grades of petrol to push the price of a gallon of four-star above £2. Esso started the latest round of increases on Wednesday with a 4.4p rise.

Motorists will now be paying between £2.04 and £2.05 for a gallon of four-star and an average of £1.91 for a gallon of unleaded. Jet, the discount petrol retailer, has yet to announce any increase.

BP said yesterday that the latest increases were forced

N&P's criticised chief steps down

By JON ASHWORTH

BEN Thompson-McCausland has stepped down as chief executive of the National & Provincial building society, after growing criticism of the society's lack of direction.

He has been replaced by David O'Brien, who was managing director of Rank Xerox (UK) until May, and has been a non-executive director of N & P since 1987.

A question mark has been hanging over the society's future direction since October, when plans to follow Abbey National to the stockmarket were shelved. The society, which is Britain's sixth largest, is believed to have spent £10 million last year researching the possibility of a flotation, but postponed the plans because of the weak state of the housing market.

The society has been criticised for an ambitious growth policy that lacks a clear direction. It launched a new life company in February in a joint venture with General Accident and is promoting a new Visa credit card.

Ken Andrews, group director of strategy and marketing, left N & P in January, amid uncertainty over the society's future direction. At the time, the society shed 80 jobs and closed six of its branches. Barbara Vondi, head of N & P's strategic planning group, left in January.

The society is still trying to recruit a finance director, six months after the board reshuffle that created the vacancy.

Richard Newton, chairman of N & P, said Mr Thompson-McCausland had left "by mutual consent".

Personal references to Lawson edited

Book sheds light on Walters's views

By RODNEY LORD, ECONOMICS EDITOR

SIR Alan Walters, in his book *Sterling in Danger*, originally entitled the chapter on exchange rate policy in the Eighties "The economic consequences of Mr Lawson". This and a number of other references of a personal nature to Mr Lawson were excised in the course of the cabinet office's scrutiny of the book.

The need which the government felt to cut out these references casts a side light on Sir Alan's approach to his role as adviser to the prime minister. If he could not see that phrases such as these would be politically damaging then perhaps his semi-public comments on the chancellor's exchange rate policy are less surprising, comments which ultimately led to Nigel Lawson's resignation.

The reference to the economic consequences of Mr Lawson is a conscious echo of John Maynard Keynes' famous essay on *The economic consequences of*

Mr Churchill, published in 1925. Sir Alan draws a parallel between Churchill's return to the gold standard, and the ensuing recession, and Mr Lawson's conversion to exchange rate stability and the rise in inflation.

Yet Sir Alan, in his book, seems to be as guilty as the next man of pursuing a golden rule by which monetary policy can be run. Either freely floating exchange rates or irrevocably fixed ones can be a workable policy, he says, but not the "half-baked" exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System.

Better still would be to introduce a new European currency, which would be pegged to a basket of commodities.

Like other critics of Mr Lawson's later years as chancellor, Sir Alan seems to have forgotten why it was that a stable exchange rate ever came to seem attractive. If only, he says, the government had simply gone on reducing the narrow measure of the money supply,

M0. If only, say other critics, such as Tim Congdon, the government had paid more attention to the broad measure of money, M4.

For the most part, these analyses benefit greatly from hindsight. The fact is that after several years of experiment with monetary targets, the government despaired of being able to interpret reliably the movements in the money supply and began to see attractions in an exchange rate rule. Even then, the length and strength of Mr Lawson's commitment to a stable exchange rate can easily be exaggerated. Pegging the pound at DM3 came about almost by accident in the latter part of 1987.

There were, undoubtedly, errors of policy. Even Mr Lawson not a man much given to apportioning blame, close to admitting that his own odd book does not convince the reader that his reading of history or prescription for the future has the answers.



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Past performance is no guarantee of future success.

BY GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

Remedial: aggravation

Comment, page 25

ADRIAN BROOKS

Robert Gunn at yesterday's annual meeting of Boots, his last as chairman

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

Harsh climate: Alan Green and Jack Cynamon, joint managing directors of Jacques Vert, the fashion retailer

By Neri Bennett

By JONATHAN PRYNN

By PHILIP PANGALOS



Bond: ordered to pay costs



ICI opens door to dividend cuts

COMMENT

DAVID BREWERTON

Many a chief executive has been wondering whether he should recommend to his board that, given the outlook for profits and the high cost of finance, dividends should be pegged, or even cut. Imperial Chemical Industries has given them all a lead by restricting its interim dividend to last year's level, an effective reduction in inflation at nearly 10 per cent. When ICI last cut its dividend, it started a flood of similar reductions and the same thing could happen this time. What is good for ICI, after all, is fine for lesser enterprises.

ICI felt it had little choice. By now, the European heavy chemicals business should have seen the bottom of the cycle, and be feeling the first gentle slopes of the upturn. But industry is still looking for the nadir. In the unminced words of Sir Denis Henderson, in the heavy chemical industry, "growth has slowed, prices are declining and costs are generally rising". It is, he said, tough out there. While we have been here before, many times, the half yearly results demonstrate that the cyclical

nature of the industry gets no better.

Profits in general chemicals are halved, in petrochemicals and plastics they have fallen by two thirds, and in fertilisers they have virtually disappeared. The figures also make the point that while ICI would be in a pretty poor state had it not driven its business upmarket and upmargin in effect chemicals, it is still not moving fast enough to keep the total moving when the old basic business is in trouble.

ICI is no longer the bellwether of British industry, but it still has the capacity to shake the market and change the tone. What shook the market yesterday is that profits in the second quarter were significantly worse than those of the first quarter, and even those followers who have argued for a rerating were wondering if they should begin eating their words. The company might be dashing up the escalator, but the stairs are still moving down.

The disposal of the fertiliser business will bring in a limited amount of cash, but it will remove a raft of profitless activity and allow management and resources to be concentrated on the lighter end of the industry. The surprise is that ICI soldiered on with a cause which Fisons considered lost a decade ago.

ICI profits will be down for the full year, and analysts were sharpening their red pencils to cut forecasts to around the £1.2 billion level for the full year. Even at that level, confidence was more a matter of whistling in the dark than conviction.

Given the state of profits and the job losses associated with the withdrawal from fertiliser manufacturing, ICI is beyond criticism

for its dividend decision. And even on a maintained final payment, which is the best and most likely outcome of the year, the shares yield a comforting 7 per cent.

The company chose a fine day to announce the sale of what remains of the country's fertiliser industry to the Finnish state-owned company, Kemira. Scarcely has the ink dried on ICI's press release when Peter Lilley, our brand new trade secretary, penned a Commons written answer to the effect that he would be looking closely at takeovers by companies having elements of state control, where such control could distort the workings of normal competitive market forces. Mr Lilley,

however, had fertilisers less in mind than banks and insurance when he took his bulldozer to try to level the playing field.

Goodwill?

Goodwill is a term appropriate to Michael Renshall, the patient and fatherly Peat partner who was present at the first meeting of the Accounting Standards Committee when it was set up by the accountancy institutes in 1969 and has now chaired its last. Yet his committee's recent proposals on goodwill in balance sheets have caused a vitriolic controversy.

The heat generated is unmatched since the long battle over inflation accounting which gave the committee more headlines than anything else during its 20 year life, most of them hostile. Despite this monumental diversion, the 22

surviving and usually unconventional accounting standards it developed, as well as much other work, have transformed the quality and comparability of big companies' accounts from the bad old days.

The successor full-time Accounting Standards Board is aimed at resolving potential conflict between professionals, companies and other users by bringing them all into the standard-setting process. That will classically involve a rethink on goodwill.

Mr Renshall has already seen the smoke from a much greater battle ahead. The development of the single European market has accelerated the inevitable collision between the flexible Anglo-Saxon system and the continental system, which focuses on detailed protective legislation and encourages conservative rather than realistic accounting. The accounting profession is much more highly developed and dynamic in Britain, along with the United States, than in most continental countries. Its ability to move with the times is under threat.

Cash cure is needed for transport thrombosis



ATA railway engineers' lunch in March 1988, I initiated a new campaign for a "reliably fast" rail link between "Business Britain" through or round London to the Kent coast.

For 27 months, I stoked the argument in speeches all over Britain, and many other voices took it up strongly — regional business organisations and relatively green action groups, northern MPs and local authorities of all political shades, the metropolitan local authorities of southeast England and the Tory county council of Kent, the shadow cabinet and the CBI.

Two of its more extraordinary episodes were a conference in Yorkshire this spring convened by the Kent county council to assure the North that Kent wanted the link built as soon as possible, in an orderly manner; and the intervention of the European Commission and the European Investment Bank, pleading to be allowed to support it financially.

It was not a party political issue — it was a national expression of the need to be connected to the rest of the single market: of the fear of being marginalised on the periphery of Europe.

Yet, in June, the prime minister and the chancellor turned it down, confirming the fears of those north of Watford — many likely to vote in marginal constituencies. Having accepted that congestion would rule in the Southeast after the mid-1990s, if it does not already, the cabinet decided to add nothing to current investment plans to ease "the thrombosis in the Southeast, threatening the arteries of Britain". It decided to do nothing for that, but to spend a few hundred million pounds of public money on better toll-free access from Tyneside to London, via the A1 — giving access for British business only to the northern rim of the "transportation swamp that lies between the Thames and the Channel Ports", an enlarged Dover and the Tunnel.

It was a decision without any vision of our future in Europe, a weak decision, readily evident as such by the feeble quality of the arguments to justify it, served up by the parliamentary and Whitehall machine. But the multi-party campaign failed.

Where were the flaws that tripped the campaign? Paul Channon, the former transport secretary, made a fundamental error when he entrusted the project (at the Tory Conference in 1988) to British Rail as an opening towards privatisation, rather

than as its project. BR made an unprecedented hash of developing it into 1989 and then Trafalgar House/Balfour Beatty showed lamentable form in an uneasy partnership with BR to launch it in 1990.

Had the government said in October 1988 — "a hybrid bill to sort out road and rail connections between the north and west sides of London, Dover and the tunnel will be presented to Parliament in November 1990, with financing sorted out by April 1991", the link could have been on schedule to open in 1996/7 — probably three years after it is needed. Privatisation was the tail on the dog, to be sorted out in reviews of BR's future — yet it wagged the whole dog from the start.

Why, though, did Mrs Thatcher not say last month: "The Eurorail joint venture proposal is unacceptable, but the link is essential, so a

revenues in the later nineties — but it did. It may boggle as many minds that Treasury expenditure planning refuses to distinguish between productive capital, maintenance capital (for the fabric of public services) and current spending (salaries of civil servants etc) except in that investment projects are easier to cut, by stopping them — but it's true.

Against that background, how could Cecil Parkinson wheedle a few hundred million pounds of 1991-4 money for the A1 improvements, but not for the link?

The answer is again mind-boggling — the Treasury. The government has not absorbed the evidence that it is not possible in the 1990s to make sense of transportation in northwest Europe, including the British Isles, unless investment in air (traffic control and runways), road and rail are examined as alternatives. You should do one or other, according to circumstances.

Their costs and revenues will be different, but rail, road and air offer alternative solutions to such problems, for example, as landed in ministerial laps again last week from the Civil Aviation Authority — "we need another runway in the Southeast". They must be evaluated on the same criteria.

How does the Treasury see this? Quite differently: it considers roads are already paid for, old boy, so the criteria are different. This piece of intellectual dishonesty ignores the fact that hypothecation of Road Fund licence revenues ended in the 1920s — and adding in the petrol tax is like saying that tobacco taxation is for building smoking saloons.

In order for a road to be built, the Treasury wants it to seem like a good idea after some private socio/political/economic analysis, but a new rail line must earn a cash return. Just look at the result in Docklands: an inadequate light railway, justified, after downsizing, by over-conservative cash revenue forecasts will parallel a toll-free Limehouse road tunnel. The most expensive piece of road in Britain is being built "because it seems like a good idea".

Britain's decline over three decades is littered with Treasury vetoes on investment. In infrastructure, whether transportation or training, they risk proving fatal to our future — which is in Europe. It helps no one if the long-term investment of public funds in our future is defined, and derided, as "subsidy".

Alastair Morton
Chief Executive,
Eurotunnel

Mountleigh's future brightens

FOLLOWERS of Mountleigh have spent so long groping in the dark that the burst of light flooding the latest results was almost blinding. As the vision cleared, Mountleigh began to appear a real investment prospect again.

A degree of scepticism about the group's new guiding lights, Nelson Peltz and Peter May, the American entrepreneur, has been understandable, even creditable, but it left the market somewhat unprepared yesterday for the scale of the new team's year-end clear-out and future ambition.

Mountleigh is a property company that wants to be an industrial conglomerate. Market conditions dictate that it remains a property company longer than it would like, but the management has written down the value of the portfolio to what everyone else thought it was worth all along, and will unload what they can, when they can.

When you have made as much money as Mr Peltz and Mr May, and you bring in a chief executive as respected as Clive Strowger, GrandMet's former finance director, it is a little easier to squeeze money and time out of your bankers.

Mountleigh has been promised some £335 million of financing by the banks who have already made fortunes from backing the two Americans' skill in restructuring trading companies. And the cash is already earmarked for pan-European acquisitions, something with strong brands, tangible assets and powerful stock market possibilities.

Only someone with an impressive track record could have won agreement to embark on such a plan while so much of the dead wood remains to be cleared out.

However, all Mountleigh's cards have been laid on the table. Britain has been written down by £56.1 million, to around £550 million, while provisions of £19.8 million have been charged against the cost of McKinsey-inspired plans for Galenas Preciados, the Spanish retailer.

The two exceptions more than accounted for operating profits of just £60.3 million, and with interest soaking up a further £31.2 million, tax taking £8.1 million and extraordinary losses such as the loss on the

ill-fated Storehouse venture, leaving a thumping loss of £54.9 million.

But the net asset value of 260p a share is the key figure. The kind of discount that Mountleigh shares, at 146p, reflect would be more consistent with a company where asset values were crashing, rather than creeping ahead as they are likely to do now.

Mountleigh is not out of the woods yet, but it has found the exit. It could take a couple of years to reach it, but its rewards, as one of the few pan-European investment plays, may be worth the wait.

David S Smith

JUDGING from its name alone, David S Smith (Holdings), the paper and packaging company, is never going to come into the glamour stock category. Nevertheless, while the UK corporate sector sweats it out, the company is one of many quietly going about its business, investing for the long term, and letting the former shooting stars take the headlines.

That is not to say it is immune from pain. Pre-tax profits for the year to end April were down one-fifth at £26.4 million. Ironically, it was one of the fallen angels, Colortrol, that caused part of the problem, in the form of a £1.7 million bad debt, taken above the line as an exceptional item.

That the market has taken the figures in its stride is largely due to analysts' faith in the all-singing, all-dancing

paper mill Smith is developing at Kemsley. The development soaked up £10 million of capital expenditure in the last financial year and the company has a further £13 million allocated to it for next. The mill is not scheduled to come fully on stream until financial year 1991/92. When it does, it will add 200,000 tons to the company's capacity and will be one of the most advanced paper mills in Europe.

So far, so good, but only if you believe this year's flat consumer demand can recover to take up the supply.

The jury is still out on this point, hence some very wide-ranging forecasts for two years down the track. Bulls are pencilling in £45 million pre-tax profits for 1991/92, bears, £10 million less.

In the meantime, the company is well capitalised, with gearing at around 30 per cent, and can still be regarded as a legitimate bid target. The 3.7 per cent yield is unexciting and the 11.5 multiple not particularly cheap, but it does represent a significant discount to the sector on the more optimistic view. With its solid view of assets, the share is attractive to the longer term investor.

Robert M Douglas

PERHAPS somebody should tell Robert M Douglas that the building sector has hit a recession. The civil engineer and construction equipment

group has demonstrated remarkable resilience by delivering a 39 per cent increase in annual pre-tax profits to £12.39 million at this stage of the building cycle.

Margins have been maintained despite competitive pressures, and a 62 per cent increase in the annual dividend to 10.5p a share suggests that directors are confident this was no fluke. The current order book is worth £250 million.

Douglas has succeeded through specialising in unglamorous niche areas. Construction equipment, the largest contributor to group profits, supplies the moulds into which concrete is poured to make tunnels or bridges. Thus the company is involved with a wide range of schemes from the Channel Tunnel to roadbuilding. The smaller specialist contracting division builds car parks.

Douglas has also focused on its home ground in the Midlands, where activity is still relatively strong, and has avoided London and the southeast. Its fledgling house-building operations, built on land acquired at low prices years ago, are dotted around the Black Country where prices are steady.

Gearing at year-end was just 16.5 per cent, and borrowings will virtually disappear after the sale of a timeshare operation in the Lake District which the company expects to complete this year. The company is well-placed to benefit as soon as interest rates fall. At 37.5p, on a prospective p/e of 6.25, the shares are cheap.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Still waters run deep

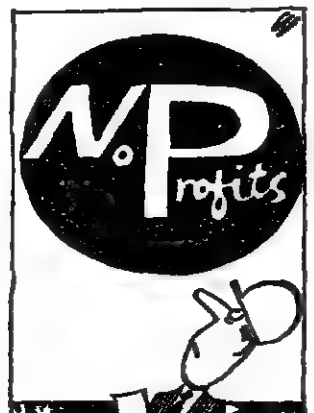
UNAWARE that it was under close observation, a yacht called *Southern Cross* and known to be one of those owned by Alan Bond, the Australian tycoon, cruised into a picturesque harbour on Sardinia's Emerald Coast on Tuesday and dropped anchor for the night. Bond was not on board, since, given his increasingly prudent nature, the boat had been chartered out to a party of wealthy South Americans. *Southern Cross's* presence came as something of an unwelcome shock to the next floating gin palace to come into the harbour, *Hansa*, which abruptly stopped preparations to drop anchor, and went in search of another stop-over. *Hansa*, as luck would have it, is owned by none other than Tiny Rowland, the Loutho chief executive. And although he did not appear to be on board either, several members of his family were. The setting for this amusing incident was the bay used in the James Bond movie *The Spy Who Loved Me*, in which

a white Lotus car is driven out of the water on to the beach. That beach is overlooked by one of the plush hotels in the vicinity, the Cala de Volpe, which, translated from Spanish, means, appropriately, Bay of the Fox. For, witnessing the whole affair was Ali Fayed, the House of Fraser chairman, as he sipped his non-alcoholic sun-downer on the deck of his teak schooner, *Sakara*, moored in the same bay.

Reeling 'n' rocking

THE Highlands and Islands of Scotland could be reeling — or maybe even rock 'n' rolling — in September when Iain Robertson chief executive designate of the new Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Due to come into existence officially in April next year, the HIE will replace the 25-year-old Highlands and Islands Development Board, set up by the government to stem the area's depopulation. For although he is a native of Perthshire, Robertson, aged 40, is not the sort of man one would expect to find tucked away in one of Scotland's more remote areas. A solicitor-turned-oil

industry man, and the son of a Church of Scotland minister, he has been employed by BP in Cleveland, Ohio, for the past three years, as the director responsible for acquisitions and divestitures



within its American offshoot. One of his more unusual duties there was, at the request of Bob Horton — then chief executive of BP's North American operations, and now chairman of the whole group — to lead a campaign to have Cleveland selected as the location for a national rock 'n'

roll museum and hall of fame. So persuasive were Robertson's presentations that Cleveland, not otherwise known for its tourist attractions, won.

GIVING share tips is a hazardous occupation, as Hoare Govett has learned to its cost. The chief executive of a building company recently sacked the firm as its broker and he has now let slip that he once asked an HG corporate financier for a tip. He was told to buy *Lawrence's Queensway*, then 50p. The chief executive duly invested £5,000 of his own money. Yesterday the shares closed at 29p. There but for the grace of God...

Mot juste

SIR Trevor Holdsworth, incoming chairman of National Power, has given his own explanation for the choice of Verdi's *Requiem Mass* for a company-sponsored concert in St Paul's Cathedral, a source of much friendly speculation. Although arranged some time ago, the concert happened to take place on the eve of publication

of the company's first accounts, which showed a large loss, and in the middle of tense negotiations over the amount of debt the government will park in the balance sheets of the two privatised electricity generating companies. Sir Trevor found his source in the programme notes, where the *Juste Juge* verse in the mass translates as: *Just judge of recompense, I pray, cancel my debt, too great to pay, before the last accounting day.*

Man from the Pru

THE legendary if anonymous "Man from the Pru" seems to have materialised. An announcement from the International Stock Exchange on the membership of an inter markets working party to sort out the mess over index futures calculations names ten people who will join Peter Jones, chairman of the index committee and the working party in its deliberations. The announcement adds darkly: "A representative from Prudential will also join the working party."

Carol Leonard



1990 Half Year Results

The unaudited trading results of the Group for the first half of 1990, with comparative figures for 1989, are as follows:

ICI Group financial highlights				
*Group means Imperial Chemical Industries PLC and its subsidiaries.				
£m means millions of pounds sterling.				
1989	Year*	1990		
First Half	Em	First Half		
Em	Em	Em		
1,468	2,917	1,526		
5,174	10,254	5,297		
6,642	13,171	6,823		
			Turnover	
			United Kingdom	
			Overseas	
			Total	
925	1,527	733		
			Profit on ordinary activities before taxation	
562	930	472		
			Net profit attributable to parent company	
—	127	—100		
			Extraordinary items	
82.0p	135.0p	67.4p		
			Earnings before extraordinary items per £1 Ordinary Share	
21.0p	55.0p	21.0p		
			Dividends (net) per £1 Ordinary Share	

*Abridged results. Full accounts with an unqualified audit report have been lodged with the Registrar of Companies.

Trading results for the first nine months of 1990 will be announced on Thursday 25 October 1990.

Portfolio

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payment passed / Price of suspension of children
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 Foreigner marriage / Ex 100% / Ex 100% / Ex 100%
 100% of 100% / 100% of 100% / 100% of 100%

[illegible]

Bonus price for Fiesta

In the future, engines will be smaller but more efficient. Mr Bulman adds: "Already our engines are as horse-power-efficient as any on the market, and we are continually working on lean-burn technology. The internal combustion engine seems to have a long life yet."

A motorcyclist's nightmare is finding a wet patch he or she cannot see. Diesel fuel, which is poisonous and often escapes from heavy goods vehicles, is one of the worst problems. New government rules force better maintenance of fuel tanks to prevent future spillages.

Although Ford is estimated to account for 70 per cent of Cosworth business these days, the complete package of engineering expertise and manufacturing it offers is in great demand at home and overseas. High on the list of manufacturers wanting to be in-

secret. Mr. Bulman adds: "Our working relationships are exceptionally good with Ford because the company does not inhibit our working with other people."

With so much success on Cosworth's hands in road engine projects, the emphasis of the

All-terrain vehicles, more popular than ever, are now being used as more than go-and-show cars. Specialist firms are refining them to increase their versatility

Power cruiser

Land-Rover's four-wheel-drive Discover looks handsome as suggested, but hardly holds out the prospect of speed. Even the raciest of the models, the £16,885 3.5-litre V8, has a top speed of only 102mph and a 0-60mph time of 12.7 seconds—similar to the performance of a family saloon, but that can be improved.

JE Motors, of Coventry, which built the rally-winning engines for the works Range Rover teams in events such as the Paris-Dakar, has turned its competition knowledge to the Discover. The engine is rebored to 4.3 litres and this



Discovery, Land Rover's with some tweaking, produces a radically different performance.

The result is that for £7,353 extra, a JE conversion Discovery becomes a 129mph long-distance cruiser with more than adequate off-road ability, and the total cost is still less than the price of the cheapest petrol-driven Range Rover.

The vehicle, renamed the "Dakar" Discovery, has a good-looking contender drawback. Although it has 220 bhp, it remains a gas-guzzler. JE Motors claims to have improved the standard average fuel consumption by 10-15 per cent, taking it to about 16-17mpg. This compares well with Land Rover's claimed 13mpg for town driving, but will leave many drivers asking whether it really is worth it.

JEREMY HART

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Riding to recognition in a foreign land

Greg LeMond, the American who won the Tour de France for the second year in succession this week, will be making a rare appearance in Britain when he competes this weekend on the roads around Brighton. LeMond, who also holds the world professional road race championship, is taking part in the Wincanton Classic, one of the 13 events around the globe in the World Cup series.

Last year, after Greg LeMond had won the Tour de France for the second time and returned to the United States for the winter, the French sports newspaper *L'Equipe* sent a reporter with him to write about the reaction back home. There wasn't much. The journalist's account said: When LeMond went to the White House to see President Bush, not a head turned in recognition as LeMond strolled up Pennsylvania Avenue. Even worse, when he reported at the airport in Minneapolis that a suitcase was missing from the flight, the woman behind the counter never looked up when he gave his name. "How do you spell that?" was all she asked. The Frenchman wrote that LeMond seemed accustomed to this treatment and was not even ruffled.

Despite the French sonnet of his family name, Gregory James LeMond is as American as mud pie or his favourite Tex-Mex enchiladas. His ancestors were mainly Scots-Irish on his father's side, and English and Cherokee Indian on his mother's. "Possibly my dad's side of the family is French way back," he says in trying to explain the sound of his name. "The name used to be spelled LeMond, but they dropped the e because in America everybody pronounced it 'LeMondy'."

His sense of being an American, and therefore a curiosity in cycling, was reinforced throughout LeMond's first years as a professional racer. For many seasons in Europe, he was always introduced at races as "Greg LeMond, American" or "Greg LeMond, of American". French, Spanish and Italian crowds marvelled at the rarity of an American competing in what was regarded as a pre-eminently European sport. Yet late in the 19th-century professional bicycle racing was a major American sport, rivaling even baseball. "Cycle racing occupies as prominent a place in the estimation of the ever-vexatious public as any sport recorded on the calendar," reported *Spalding's Official Bicycle Guide* for 1898, two years after the *Telegraph* Trophy Race in Worcester, Massachusetts, had attracted 50,000 spectators. With the advent of the automobile, however, the roads were cleared of cycling races and the sport began to focus on the track, where sprinting and six-day races remained popular for decades. A full racing circuit ranged from Boston and Worcester to Newark, New Jersey; St Louis, Missouri; Toledo, Ohio; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Des Moines and Council Bluffs, Iowa; Salt Lake City, and San Francisco and San Jose, California.

Then the sport went into such total decline during the Depression that Americans forgot about it. When LeMond won the Tour de France in 1989, the ABC programme devoted to the final stage attracted a North American audience measured at five points, more than double most previous Tour programmes. Explaining the rating, an ABC official told *L'Equipe* that though such a rating was far below the World Series or the Super Bowl, it was respectable for "a non-American sport."

LeMond bristles at this attitude, even though he understands it. He remembers that he bought his first bike not to race but simply to get around. When Americans think of the cycle, they think mainly of competition. Cycling is the most popular American recreational sport, with 85 million participants, including 20 million who cycle at least once a week, but the difference between recreational and professional riders is enormous.

"Everybody rides a bicycle when he's a kid, and so he thinks it's the easiest thing in the world to do," Bernard Hinault, the French rider, often complains. "Or may be they still ride on the weekend with their kids or go shopping on a bicycle. That's enough to convince them that they understand racing. Sometimes they might even get rained on before they make it home, so they think they know just how it is for us with 150 kilometres to go in rain or snow. If everybody's done it, it can't be very hard, can it?"

Especially since 1984, when US riders won a handful of gold medals at the Los Angeles Olympic Games because such traditional powerhouses as East Germany and the Soviet Union boycotted the event, cycle racing has been gaining popularity in the United States. The United States Cycling Federation which governs the sport, often cites the 1984 Olympics as the spark the sport needed to catch fire — an attitude that LeMond contests. "The people there don't understand anything," he complained a few years ago, before the federation changed many of its officers. "My dad was talking to a USCF official who said, 'It's incredible how popular cycling has become in the United States. We've gotten 6,000 new licences in the four or five months since August 1986, and I honestly can't tell you why I don't understand why the sport is so popular now.'"

He took no account of his victory in the 1986 Tour and how much the publicity about it meant to cycling in America. I believe most of its growth in the US comes from my first victory in the Tour.



Hitting the road to success: LeMond strives to recover his fitness during the 1987 tour (above) and claims the world championship in 1989 (above right)

GREG LEMOND FACTS AND FIGURES

Born: June 28, 1961, Lakewood, California.
Lives: Wayzata, Minnesota.
Achievements: World junior champion, 1978; world professional road race champion, 1983 and 1989; first American to win Tour de France, 1986, won it again, 1989, 1990. Only four riders have won both world professional road race championship and the Tour de France in the same year.

and Goodwood, and what he perceived as a lack of respect for his accomplishments.

By European standards — ones LeMond is now accustomed to — the USCF was long regarded as a notoriously inept group divided by internal politics and at best indifferent to US professional riders. "The amateur programme in America has people with no knowledge advising it," LeMond complained after his first Tour victory. "Predictably, American cycling officials were upset by my turning pro. Eddy Borysewicz warned me, 'You're going to burn out by turning professional.' Burn out! What I've been burned by is sideline coaches, especially when I was young and much more advanced than anybody else in America cycling. Sideline coaches don't know nearly as much as they think they do. Luckily, I had a level-headed head to realise that nobody in the US knew what they were talking about. If I'd listened to all the sideline coaches there,

I'd have stayed an amateur until the 1984 Olympic Games, which would have stymied my whole career. I might never have been the cyclist that I am today. Coaches in the US work at a much lower level than, say, Cyrille Guimard (former manager of the Renault team). They simply don't know what it takes to make it."

"So I made up my own mind. I honestly feel I've always made the right decisions for my career. A lot of people said, 'Greg is going to be chewed up by the Europeans. He won't accomplish anything.' They got it wrong, didn't they?"

"But that's the way they think at the top level in American cycling. Let me tell you about the junior world championships in Argentina in 1979. It was probably the most successful junior world championships for an American team ever, and I don't think we got even a congratulatory telegram from anybody connected with the US Cycling Federation except for Eddy B.

"In Buenos Aires, we did something that's never been done in American cycling, and I won three medals. Finally we're going to get some recognition, I thought. On the plane back home we all wore our USA uniforms, and we wondered how many journalists would be at the airport and how big the crowd would be. But at Kennedy Airport only Eddy B was waiting for us. Nobody else cared. There were no journalists, no fans, and especially no USCF officials."

LeMond will not acknowledge it, but he knows that American officials were right to worry about his chances in Europe at that time. "Finally, though, with the 7-Eleven team turning professional in 1985 and participating in European races like the Tour de France, people in the United States are getting a good view of a break. I don't think that's unreasonable." His main goal is the Tour de France; after that, he often returns to the United States before some major fall races simply because he is burned out.



"Ever since I went to Europe, I've been accused of neglecting American racing, but I feel I've been doing more good for American cycling by winning in Europe. I could race in the US for the next 20 years and not do as much good for American cycling as I did by winning the Tour de France. When was the last time you saw the result of a bicycle race on the front page of *The New York Times*?"

Along with any imagined or real criticism in his own country, which became muted after he had been shot and seriously hurt in a hunting accident in 1987, LeMond has endured criticism in Europe because of his way of life. Other American riders have analyzed the differences between American and European attitudes, and Ron Kiefel of the 7-Eleven team, who was the US national champion in 1988, sums it up well. "Americans see things outside cycling," he says. "We have a much broader perspective. We think about education and our families. We know that if something happens, we can always go out and get a good job. In Europe it's cycling or nothing: you ride your bike or you go to work in a factory or on a farm. They don't go to school and cycle at the same time; they make their choice at a young age."

Family and life beyond cycling concern LeMond, too. "I want to be as successful as I can while still keeping a somewhat normal life," he says. "The way some riders live is not normal. When all you do for 12 years is race, eat, sleep, and then race again, you're missing out on life, and you'll never recapture those years."

In his open easy-going way, he is extremely popular with most other riders, but for a long time he was regarded almost as a dilettante who succeeded because of his vast physical gifts. How well would he ride if he took it seriously? more than one team official asked.

He does take it seriously, LeMond answers. "It makes me bitter to be criticised for not being single-minded," he said. "I've had to sacrifice and dedicate myself to a foreign sport in foreign countries."

LeMond mentioned an article that appeared years ago in *Bicycling* magazine in the United States, comparing him to the ascetic Sean Kelly. "If Greg wants to be a true champion, he can't play golf," he said, parroting the criticism. "Those may not have been the exact words, but that was the point of the article — that Greg LeMond doesn't act like a European. But I'm American, and I come from a different way of life. If an American magazine can't understand that, no wonder the Europeans can't either."

Unlike many Europeans, LeMond does not ride six-day races in the winter, participate in all the prestigious classics in the spring and autumn, and live in Europe the year round. "It's very difficult for me to race from February to October without a break. I don't think that's unreasonable." His main goal is the Tour de France; after that, he often returns to the United States before some major fall races simply because he is burned out.

A major part of the European misunderstanding of him, LeMond feels, is that people do not understand how difficult it is to be riding far from his own country, and how he needs to live occasionally like any American of his age. "I get tired of talking to the same journalists and having them write the same stories with the same criticism over and over again. Like about golf."

Before he was shot, LeMond was an avid golfer, usually scoring in the low 80s. By playing the game, however, he defied conventional wisdom that a rider should stay off his feet when not training or racing. During a day off in the Coors Classic in Colorado in 1986, when American television showed LeMond out golfing, his French team-mates were scandalized. After their usual training ride, most of them had spent the rest of the day in bed.

LeMond makes it clear that he goes to golf to relax not because he is not dedicated. "You can't have the Tour de France, the Super Prestige award, and the world championship without training hard. Those victories didn't happen by accident I worked for them."

"I've lived my life the way I wanted to and I've been criticized for it, but I'm happy, and that's what's most important to me. If I golf in Belgium during the season, I'm doing it because I know it's not going to affect my cycling. What it boils down to is that my priorities are a little different from, say, Sean Kelly's."

LeMond chose the right man as contrast. In a now-classic story, first told in the book *Kelly*, by the Irish journalist David Walsh, after a race in the Netherlands Kelly's wife, Linda, was sitting on the hood of the family car, waiting for her husband. When she got down, she left a mark where her hand had rested, and Kelly wiped it away without a word. Wildly annoyed, Linda complained that her husband's priorities were first his wife, then his bike, and finally his wife. As Walsh wrote, "Kelly heard the accusation, turned and with a look of deadly seriousness told his wife that she had gotten the order wrong. 'The bike comes first.'"

"That's the kind of mentality I have to fight in Europe: that bike racing is the top priority," LeMond said. "When I was shot there was a big scandal about my going hunting. Instead of people asking, 'Is he going to live?' they said, 'Greg should never have been out hunting.' Those people are so callous. If I'd been racing the Tour of Italy and had a disabling accident, that would have been hurt in what the writer considered the line of duty."

LeMond is also troubled by his reputation as a businessman in a cyclist's shorts and jersey, but bristles at the critics. "I came to Europe to win the Tour de France, but I also knew that I was a professional, and in order to live and survive, I had to act like one. If I talk to a team about a contract, I've got to be prepared, because those guys on the other side of the desk are businessmen."

This is an extract from Greg LeMond: The Incredible Comeback, by Samuel Abi, published by Stanley Paul (£12.99).

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Off The Record in mood for another fruitful excursion

By MANDARIN (MICHAEL PHILLIPS)

HOPES of a Yorkshire-trained winner of the King George at Ascot tomorrow will be pinned on Sapience, Jimmy Fitzgerald's challenger from Malton. Today, they lie with Off The Record, who has made the long journey from Chris Thornton's Middleham yard to contest the Brown Jack Stakes.

Off The Record won the valuable Commonwealth Handicap on Eclipse day at Sandown on his last trip south. He was well ridden on that occasion by Michael Roberts, who is in the saddle again.

Earlier in the season, a few unflattering remarks were being said about Off The Record, but at Sandown he could not have raced more willingly for Roberts as he ran on strongly up the hill to beat Nafzawa and Folk Dance.

Perhaps, his confidence had been boosted by that very easy victory on the all-weather track at Southwell two weeks earlier. Whatever the reason, Off The Record looked in form, and I believe he can still hold Crystal Spirit, Make Contact and Northward Star, who were all behind him at Sandown.

Admittedly, it was Make Contact's first race of the season and he has won since at Newbury where he just managed to hold Janiski. On 3lb better terms, the latter has the better chance now, at least in theory.

Penny Forum has looked in good form the twice he has been to Chester recently, while Hail Caesar could turn out to be a decent stayer. However,



Thornton: raids Ascot with Off The Record

the handicapper has taken no chances with him on the slender evidence available and I much prefer Off The Record. Bertie Wooster, who won the Havelat Handicap two years ago, is the only course and distance winner in today's field. On his last visit to the track he was an honourable fifth in the Wokingham Stakes on the final day of the Royal Ascot meeting.

On that run there should be little between him and the Wokingham fourth, Bocas Rose, who has run well since at Newmarket. However, I doubt whether they can concede the generous weight allowance to Martinovsky, who will relish the step up in distance after finishing second to Loft Boy over five furlongs at Sandown last time. A 7lb penalty incurred when winning at Ripon a week ago could prove just too much for Dry Point.

As Silca An' Key was so disappointing last time, I

think the way looks clear for Bertie, who started favourite for his only race at Newmarket last autumn, to win the Cranbourne Chase Stakes and thus spark off a double for his owner Khalid Abdulla and jockey Pat Eddery, the double to be completed by Dangora beating her fellow debutantes in the Virginia Water Maiden Stakes.

As far as the EBF Sandwich Maiden Stakes is concerned, the word from Newmarket is that Sam Surfer has shown the requisite promise there to suggest that he can unhinge Martinovsky who was beaten half a length by the Chief at Yarmouth earlier this season.

Hard As Iron, Curran Call and Fact Finder are formidable odds rivals for Absalon in the Chester Apprentice Handicap. Yet the way that Richard Hannon's three-year-old ran away with a much more valuable race at Newmarket last Saturday indicated that he ought to be followed again.

Mel's Rose is nominated as the day's best bet though to win the Avenue Handicap at Yarmouth following that heart-warming first run of the season a week ago at Newmarket where he finished third behind Fedora and Parliament Piece.

At Pontefract, Bijoux D'Or can gain his treble by winning the St John Ambulance Stakes while at Carlisle, Peter Savill's colours should also be carried to victory by Donovan Rose (2.45), who won the corresponding race last year.

Blinkered first time
Yarmouth 2.45 Sweet W Low. 3.45 Inverloch.

Salsabil decision deferred again

By GEORGE RAE

A DECISION on Salsabil's participation in tomorrow's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes at Ascot will be delayed until the last minute.

In view of the continued hot weather a final decision will not be made until Friday morning at the earliest, says his trainer John Dunlop said yesterday.

Dunlop did not expand upon his thinking, but Salsabil's connections seem to be giving the forecast rain every opportunity to arrive before coming to a decision. The official going at Ascot is good to firm with Nicholas Beaumont, the clerk of the course, continuing to water to keep the jar out of the sand.

The further delay has encouraged backers to think positively. Salsabil attracted steady support at 13-8 with Cornis yesterday morning as a solid 1-8 favourite. Old Vic was backed into 7-1 from 8-1, but stable companion Belzer, who holds an alternative engagement in the Gordon Stakes at Goodwood on Tuesday, eased out to 10-1.

Should Salsabil be with-

drawn, Willie Carson will ride Husyan, who was yesterday confirmed a definite starter by the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes at Ascot will be delayed until the last minute.

I thought they'd decided to drop into Windsor Castle for a cup of tea, says Walwyn's acid appraisal. Carson says it doesn't matter. "I know I was blamed for Ascot but Husyan doesn't stay a mile and a half," he said yesterday. "Certainly he's a good horse but there are clear signs of stalling."

Looking ahead to the Totterdale Handicap at York next month, Crack, trained by Luca Cumani, has again been heavily backed. Salsabil's connections seem to be giving the forecast rain every opportunity to arrive before coming to a decision. The official going at Ascot is good to firm with Nicholas Beaumont, the clerk of the course, continuing to water to keep the jar out of the sand.

Should Salsabil be with-

Open The Door coaxed to world mile record

CHASE The Door reduced Al Tordaman's unofficial world record time for a mile, set at Brighton just over a year ago, by a fifth of a second to 1m 30.9sec at the Sussex track yesterday.

Despite looking distinctly unenthusiastic, Chase The Door scraped home by a neck from Sno Serenade in the Brighton Summer Challenge Cup. There was ten lengths back to the third, Amethyst.

Chase The Door, like Al Tordaman, is a five-year-old, carried 12lb, 9lb more than the previous record holder.

Although unofficial and not electronically recorded, the Brighton times are very reliable and the clerk of the course, Cliff Griggs, said that he could guarantee the race distance accurate to within ten feet.

In addition, racing on the sun-baked ground, yesterday's runners were also helped by a gusty breeze, mainly from behind.

Michael Wigham brought Chase The Door to challenge Sno Serenade entering the final furlong, but the blinkered gelding immediately started trying to hang right onto his rival and

Wigham displayed considerable skill to keep him out of trouble and win the race.

Wigham, who has ridden 20 winners this season, commented: "Chase The Door needs strong handling and it's a matter of keeping him going and holding off the other horse."

Adrian Boss, who saddled the runner-up Sno Serenade and had no complaints about the finish, quickly went one better when his 14-1 chance Evening Affair delivered a late challenge, under Michael Roberts, to strike the front 100 yards out and win the Fitzherbert Handicap by 1 1/2 lengths.

Roberts completed a near-48-1 double in the Blackmante Handicap on Farmer Jack, who was racing for the second time in four days. At Bath on Monday, Farmer Jack finished best of all to be beaten less than a length after having to switch to get a run.

This time the field parted for him as he ordered and he took up the running inside the last quarter mile to beat the 25-1 chance Murrum.

Roberts commented as he dismounted: "On Monday he

was naughty, but today he was in good form." The winning trainer Norma Maculey declared: "Michael reckons that when Farmer Jack is on a good day he has never ridden anything faster in the final furlong, but the horse knows all about racing and he doesn't like the rain or cold."

Ciboure, well beaten in a Lingfield seller last Saturday, made amends in the Beau Brummel Maiden Claimer, taking up the running entering the final furlong to beat Miracles Happen by 2 1/2 lengths.

Because of problems with his stable lease at Lambourn, Willie Brooks handed in his licence last week, joined Reg Akhurst as assistant trainer and took nine horses with him.

There was a quick dividend for the new partnership with Blue Room, dropped in class on Brooks's advice, won the Ragsdale Selling Stakes by a comfortable 2 1/2 lengths. Blue Room was the twentieth winner of the season for Akhurst who now has over 100 horses in his charge, although about 40 are currently turned out.

Maktoum family spend modestly on final day

From a SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN LEXINGTON

THE Maktoum family spent modestly at Wednesday's final day of the Keeneland sales, purchasing just eight yearlings for \$93,295,000 for an average of \$287,948. This compares with last year's figures, which showed nearly \$118 million for an average of \$302,111.

However, it would be unwise to attribute the falling prices to the Keeneland July sale simply to the continuing downward adjustment of bloodstock prices.

Keeneland has been busy expanding its September sales and this year will have 3,700 yearlings on offer. That factor has gradually detracted from both the glamour and the enormous prices once so strongly associated with Keeneland's July.

YARMOUTH

Selections

By Mandarin

2.15 Grove Aries. 2.45 Ash Amour. 3.15 Hintham Harry. 3.45 My Alibi. 4.15 Shamazzana. 4.45 MEL'S ROSE (nap).

By Our Newmarket Correspondent
2.15 Grove Aries. 2.45 Tom Clapton. 3.15 Hintham Harry. 3.45 My Alibi. 4.15 Shamazzana. 4.45 MEL'S ROSE (nap).

Going: firm (straight, good to firm)
Draw: 6f-7f, high numbers best
2.15 SANDRINGHAM MAIDEN STAKES (2-Y-O: £2,289: 6f) (3 runners)
1. 3 GROVE ARIES 20 M Tompkins 9-0. R Hills 1
2. 20 SWANWICK 20 M Tompkins 9-0. R Hills 1
3. 20 SWANWICK 20 M Tompkins 9-0. R Hills 1

2.45 DOLPHIN SELLING STAKES (3-Y-O: £2,222: 1m 2f) (6)
1. 2154 TOM CLAPTON 11 (V) D Mory 9-2. W R Baines 3
2. 2154 TOM CLAPTON 11 (V) D Mory 9-2. W R Baines 3
3. 2154 TOM CLAPTON 11 (V) D Mory 9-2. W R Baines 3

3.15 STAR HANDICAP (3-Y-O: £2,788: 1m 3f 11yds) (2)
1. 2051 HINTHAM HARRY 3 (V) D Mory 9-2. W R Baines 3
2. 2051 HINTHAM HARRY 3 (V) D Mory 9-2. W R Baines 3

4-5 Hintham Harry, 11-10 Arrow Lord.

3.45 CARLTON NURSERY HANDICAP (2-Y-O: £2,322: 6f) (7)

1. 474 KELLYS KNOCKM 8 (V) R Berman 9-7. D Macdonald (7) 4
2. 474 KELLYS KNOCKM 8 (V) R Berman 9-7. D Macdonald (7) 4
3. 474 KELLYS KNOCKM 8 (V) R Berman 9-7. D Macdonald (7) 4

4.15 FURZEDOWN MAIDEN STAKES (£2,740: 1m 2f) (2)
1. 44. MEL RUS 38 (V) J Curran 3-5-4. L Dettorf 2
2. 44. MEL RUS 38 (V) J Curran 3-5-4. L Dettorf 2

4.45 AVENUE HANDICAP STAKES (£2,553: 7f) (7)
1. 223 MEL'S ROSE 7 (V) G G Hunter 5-10-1 L Dettorf (7) 1
2. 223 MEL'S ROSE 7 (V) G G Hunter 5-10-1 L Dettorf (7) 1
3. 223 MEL'S ROSE 7 (V) G G Hunter 5-10-1 L Dettorf (7) 1

COURSE SPECIALISTS
M Stour, 37 winners from 132 runners, 28.0%; L. Curran, 22 from 154, 18.2%; G Mory, 13 from 74, 17.6%; J. Williams, 12 from 74, 16.2%; G. Brier, 11 from 77, 11.7%; G. Hutter, 17 from 154, 11.0%.

JOCKEYS: L. Dettorf, 10 winners from 52 rides, 19.2%; W. R. Baines, 10 from 154, 6.5%; G. Mory, 13 from 74, 17.6%; J. Williams, 12 from 74, 16.2%; G. Brier, 11 from 77, 11.7%; G. Hutter, 17 from 154, 11.0%.

4-5 Hintham Harry, 11-10 Arrow Lord.

PONTEFRAC

Selections

By Mandarin

6.45 Bijoux D'Or. 7.10 Sapphire. 7.35 Line Of Vision. 8.5 Foolish Touch. 8.35 Noble Fellow. 9.5 Le Lingot.

By Our Newmarket Correspondent
7.10 Sapphire. 7.35 Pappagallo. 8.5 Foolish Touch. 8.5 Le Lingot.

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating
9.5 LE LINGOT.

Going: firm (good to firm in places)
Draw: 5f-6f, low numbers best

6.45 ST JOHN AMBULANCE STAKES (2-Y-O: £2,408: 5f) (4 runners)
1. 911 BLOOM FIVE 16 (V) D Mory 9-2. W R Baines 3
2. 911 BLOOM FIVE 16 (V) D Mory 9-2. W R Baines 3

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Britain take lead after dressage stage of world three-day-event championships

Inspiring start by Powell

FROM JENNY MACARTHUR IN STOCKHOLM

RODNEY Powell and The Irishman made an inspiring start to Britain's defence of the world three-day event championships in the Royal Park of Djurgården here yesterday when they went into the lead at the end of the first day of dressage.

His performance followed a superb test, earlier in the day, from Karen Straker on Get Smart — their joint scores giving Britain a 10-point lead ahead of Sweden and the Netherlands at this early stage of the competition.

Sweden's score was boosted by a good performance from Eric Duvander on High Tea who is in second place, less than a point behind Powell. Matthias Baumann, an Olympic team gold medal winner in Seoul, is lying third on Alabaster.

Powell, Britain's reigning national champion, is hoping that these championships will mark a change in the bad luck

which has dogged him in international competition — most recently at the European Championships last year where The Irishman, lying in the individual silver medal position, failed the final horse inspection.

There were, ominously, moments in the trotwork yesterday when the 11-year-old gelding, but the judges evidently attributed this to the horse's unusual action.

Powell said afterwards that he had only worked the horse in for 25 minutes before the test — in order to save his energies for tomorrow's cross-country which, he says, is the biggest course he has had to tackle.

Straker, who replaced Lorna Clarke and the injured Geraldine Mor in the team at the last minute, has been swift to justify her inclusion. Her increased confidence, reflected yesterday, should stand her in good stead tomorrow.

row when she goes first for Britain over the 32 fence cross-country course.

"It's a course where you know your own line and, even if someone before me takes a different route over a fence I still stick to my original plan. You've got to go out there with a feeling 'I can do it'."

Virginia Long, the defending world champion, and Ian Stark, Britain's best hope for an individual medal, with Murphy himself, ride their tests today.

New Zealand, who pose the biggest threat to Britain, had a disappointing test yesterday from their second rider, Andrew Scott, on Umpteen, but Mark Todd, their dual Olympic champion, should put them back in contention today.

Todd, who is riding Bahlu, describes the cross-country course as "big and technical".

In the headier atmosphere of the Olympic stadium, where the West Germans successfully began their defence of the world team dressage championships, Carl Hester made a superb start for Britain with an astonishingly authoritative performance which has put him into joint eighth place overnight.

Margit Otto-Crepin and Corlandus, from France, the former European champions have taken the overnight lead. Their energy packed and rhythmic performance yesterday suggests an exciting contest ahead on Sunday with the top West German riders for the individual title.

RESULTS: World three-day event championships (after first day of dressage). 1. The Irishman (R Powell, GB) 47.40; 2. Yon (E Duvander, Sweden) 47.40; 3. Alabaster (M Baumann, Germany) 48.00; 4. High Tea (E Duvander, Sweden) 48.00; 5. Get Smart (K Straker, GB) 52.00. World team dressage championships (after first day). 1. Corlandus (M Otto-Crepin, France) 45.50; 2. Ideal (S Hester, GB) 45.50; 3. Bahlu (V Long, NZ) 46.00; 4. Umpteen (A Scott, NZ) 46.00; 5. Murphy (I Stark, GB) 46.00.

IEF to stamp out cruelty to horses

STOCKHOLM — Count Dieter Landsberg-Velen, the president of the West German Equestrian Federation, announced here yesterday that, following further allegations of horse abuse against West German riders — made in this week's issue of *Stier*, the West German magazine — the federation planned to make all riders listed for a championship, in any discipline, sign a contract stating that his stable would be available for a snap inspection (Jenny MacArthur writes).

The accusations of cruelty made earlier this month against Paul Schockemöhle, the West German trainer, because of his method of "rapping" horses to make them jump higher placed beside the latest allegations.

The IEF, whose president, Count Landsberg-Velen, is expected to make a statement today.

POLO

A sluggish side lets Reid down

By JOHN WATSON

IN THE qualifying round for the medium-goal Harrison Cup, played off at Amberham, Sussex, yesterday, Ellerton Black beat Mill Farm (received 1/4) 8-3½ and Frasers beat Pakistani International Airlines (received 2½) 8-5½.

Mill Farm were pivoted on the six-goaler, Derek Reid, who played energetically and nimbly but was insufficiently supported by his forwards, who were not quick enough. Nor did his side mark their opposite numbers with the required vigilance.

For Ellerton Black the No. 2, Will Lucas, mounted on splendid ponies from John Horswell's string and well backed by Luis Llorenç, was usually riding loose and well forward. He opened the account from the saddle of the exceptional fast New Zealand pony, Tiffany, and, in the second chukka, scored twice to overtake the Mill Farm handicap advantage. Eventually, Lucas took six of Ellerton's eight goals.

PLA, who have been in this country less than a week, gallantly entered this tournament with 20 hired ponies. And considering they faced Frasers, who are centred on the all-England eight-goaler Julian Hipwood, formidably supported by Will Lucas's brother James, they did well to be in the lead as late as the fourth chukka, when Frasers overtook them at 6-5½.

These encounters were followed by matches in the qualifying round for another Goodwood week tournament, the four-chukka Holden White Cup. Manabunta beat Stoke and the Mechanics (received 1/4) 1-1½, and the Barbados quartet, Holders, beat Red Cell 5-2.

ELLERTON BLACK: 1. T. Henry (1); 2. W. Lucas (3); 3. L. Llorenç (3); 4. W. Lucas (3).

MILL FARM: 1. P. Hewitt (2); 2. D. James (3); 3. D. Reid (3); 4. D. Reid (3).

FRASERS: 1. G. Rodwell (1); 2. J. Lucas (3); 3. J. Hipwood (3); 4. C. Elson (1).

PAKISTANI INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES: 1. C. Elson (1); 2. C. Elson (1); 3. C. Elson (1); 4. C. Elson (1).

MANABUNTA: 1. P. Hewitt (2); 2. D. James (3); 3. D. Reid (3); 4. D. Reid (3).

STOKE: 1. G. Rodwell (1); 2. J. Lucas (3); 3. J. Hipwood (3); 4. C. Elson (1).

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GOODWILL GAMES

Soldier seeking his fortune

FROM DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT, SEATTLE

AT AN age which few athletes reach before retirement from the international circuit, Hammou Boutayeb is just beginning. He won a track race for the first time and it earned him a Goodwill Games gold medal here. "It was lucky we found him before he was too old," said his manager, M. Modali.

Boutayeb is 34 and was content to be a soldier in the Moroccan army before Said Aouita took an interest in him. That was two years ago. Last season, his second on the track, he improved on his first, but not enough to indicate what would happen this year.

He has finished twelfth in the world cross-country championship, the fifth fastest 5,000 metres runner of the year and the second fastest at 10,000 metres. That is unlikely to satisfy Aouita, who advises him on training. "Whatever Said tells me to do, I do," Boutayeb said after winning the

RESULTS FROM SEATTLE

ATHLETICS: Men's 5000m: 1. R. Barmen (US), 12:44.40; 2. J. C. Lewis (US), 12:44.40; 3. H. Boutayeb (Mor), 12:44.40; 4. D. Johnson (US), 12:44.40; 5. M. Modali (Mor), 12:44.40; 6. A. Aouita (Mor), 12:44.40; 7. N. Young (US), 12:44.40.

WOMEN'S 5000m: 1. M. Modali (Mor), 12:44.40; 2. J. C. Lewis (US), 12:44.40; 3. H. Boutayeb (Mor), 12:44.40; 4. D. Johnson (US), 12:44.40; 5. M. Modali (Mor), 12:44.40; 6. A. Aouita (Mor), 12:44.40; 7. N. Young (US), 12:44.40.

FOOTBALL

Taylor eager to restrict League programme

GRAHAM Taylor, the England manager, yesterday urged League club chairmen to seek the opinions of players and managers before voting on enlarging the first division, or on the FA chief executive, Graham Kelly, Taylor believes that more League games will have a detrimental effect among top players.

"I hope that when the proposal is made, the number of games in the first division is discussed at next week's League meeting, the opinions of the players and managers are sought," Taylor said.

When I was managing in the first division I found there were benefits in having a third rather than a fourth match schedule. With four fewer League games you are more thoroughly and there is time available to recover from injuries."

West Bromwich Albion, who won the League Cup in 1966, have a difficult first-round tie in

CYCLING

Absentees put Obree in pursuit of title

THE Tour de France may have started but the path to the pinnacle of cycle sport starts today for 400 aspirants in 23 British national championships being held over the next nine days on Leicester track.

Britain has always been strong in pursuing in which riders chase an opponent on the opposite side of the track. But this year, the absence of the two best British riders, Chris Boardman and Steve Hogg, has put the title in the hands of a newcomer, Graham Obree, the Scot who effectively uses an eccentric riding position when pursuing or time trialling.

He has twice broken the one-hour record and was fourth last year in his first attempt at the title. Bryan Steel (Team Haverhill) will also be looking for gold after his silver medal last time.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Athletes will cherish unique event

By ALIX RAMSAY

AFTER three-and-a-half years of planning and six days of competition, the Special Olympics summer games have been extinguished in Glasgow, marking the end of the largest sporting event staged in Europe for the mentally handicapped.

The athletes have gone home clutching a total of 10,000 medals and ribbons, and with memories of a unique event for some it was their first taste of competition; for others it marked yet another triumph in the growing world of international competition for the handicapped.

Barbara Hallam, from Loughborough, is 32, has Down's Syndrome, and is registered

blind. However, with two silver medals and a fourth place in the gymnastic events, she is heading home with plans to extend her trophy cabinet.

Barbara's mother, Olive, has nothing but praise for the Special Olympics movement. "Sport teaches them a competitive spirit without jealousy," she said. "When Barbara was a girl they didn't have sports for the handicapped but now, through the day centres, people are showing that the handicapped can get involved and enjoy sport. And when Barbara wins you can see her spirit just — she is on top of the world life now."

Gordon McCormack, the Games director, and his team of volunteers have frequently worked through the night trying to overcome the problems of organising mentally handicapped athletes from 31 countries through the 13 events.

McCormack believes that the Special Olympics can stand comparison with any other leading sports event. "We have shown we are serious about sport," he said.

Mark Farrell, a partially sighted runner from Wiltshire, Manchester, put a golden seal on Britain's medal tally at the World Games for the Disabled in Assen, The Netherlands, when he won the marathon.

RUGBY UNION

Dooley is back in training for England

FROM DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT
BUENOS AIRES

A RELIEVED England rugby party welcomed Wade Dooley back when they trained at the Lomas Athletic Club here yesterday. Dooley, who will be back in the international with Argentina tomorrow, was equally relieved that x-ray photographs showed no further damage other than bruising and played a full part in the morning's workout.

"We are 99.9 per cent certain that Wade will be fit to play," Geoff Cooke, the manager, said. "The x-ray was as much for his own peace of mind as anything." It will be Dooley's 35th appearance for England, carrying him ahead of Bill Beaumont, the former England captain, and his value to a team so badly in need of a boost to morale can hardly be over-emphasised.

The party trailed for nearly an hour by coach through the southern suburbs of the city to Lomas to use the only power-assisted scrummaging machine available in Buenos Aires. It cost them the use of John Oliver, the replacement hooker, for the morning since he trapped a nerve in his back bending down to scrummage but he recovered in time for a series of scrums against the Argentine forwards.

Dooley's return to the international rugby, Simon Hodgkinson's accuracy as a kicker will be tested, too, though since his seven penalties against Cuyo in Mendoza on Tuesday constitute a record for a series against Argentina, he seems unlikely to be in the team.

Hugo Porta, the former Argentine stand-off half, holds the world record for the number of penalties kicked in an international, with seven against France in Buenos Aires in 1974. The most points scored by any England player on tour is 36 by Neil Bennett (Bedford) against Western Australia in 1975.

Argentine team, page 34

TENNIS

Best of Durie just fails to earn first rubber for Britain

FROM BARRY WOOD IN ATLANTA

JO DURIE rose magnificently to the occasion, but fell just short of victory as he surrendered, 7-6, 5-7, 6-4, to Barbara Paulus, of Austria, in the quarter-final of the Federation Cup yesterday.

The match took 2½ hours, and finally hinged on a break of service as the deciding set got underway. Three forehand passes from Paulus, ranked 20 in the world, did the damage, although Durie maintained a fine challenge and gave up only three more points on her service in the remainder of the match, she was not able to break Paulus down.

"That was the best I've seen Jo play on cement for years," Allyn Jones, her coach, said, "and if the court surface had been a little faster, it could have been a different story."

After holding five break points in the eight-minute opening game, Durie then broke to lead 2-1 and again for 4-1. A little inexperience allowed Paulus to pull back to 4-2, and the Austrian recovered the second break as Durie served for the set at 5-4.

The second set best demonstrated Durie's fighting spirit. She twice went down a break, only to recover it immediately, and despite looking rather more ragged in the hot and humid conditions, her determination in the rallies earned her a break for 7-5.

While Paulus rallied strongly from the baseline, relying largely on a very capable forehand,

Durie's tactic was to take the pace from the ball with a sliced backhand, and await her opportunities to make an approach.

Several dropshots found Paulus stranded at the back of the court, and Durie's service returns also paid dividends. But in her eagerness to succeed, Durie increasingly found herself prone to the forehand pass as she attacked the net.

Throughout the week, the entire team has maintained a quiet confidence, and nobody's efforts should be ignored. With Sarah Loosemore stealing the thunder on Tuesday with her well-earned victory over Raffaella Reggi, it was easy to overlook Clare Wood's valuable contribution in the doubles.

Instead of being overcome with nerves in a tense situation, she rose to the challenge of the deciding doubles rubber and played exceptionally well, with her reactions at the net, especially, winning many valuable points.

Jennifer Capriati survived her strongest test of the week in overcoming Regina Rajchrtova, of Czechoslovakia, 6-2, 7-6. Rajchrtova served to win the second set at 5-2 and 5-4, and was then beaten 7-4 in the tie-break.

RESULTS: First round: Great Britain vs. Czechoslovakia, 2-1 (M. Jones vs. J. Rajchrtova, 6-2, 7-6; J. Durie vs. B. Paulus, 7-6, 5-7, 6-4; S. Loosemore vs. R. Reggi, 6-2, 7-6; C. Wood vs. J. Capriati, 6-2, 7-6). Second round: Great Britain vs. Czechoslovakia, 2-1 (M. Jones vs. J. Rajchrtova, 6-2, 7-6; J. Durie vs. B. Paulus, 7-6, 5-7, 6-4; S. Loosemore vs. R. Reggi, 6-2, 7-6; C. Wood vs. J. Capriati, 6-2, 7-6).

YACHTING

Headwinds hold up the leaders

By BARRY PICKTHALL

IT WAS another day of frustration for the leading yachts in the Brest Walker European Cup race to Spain as they struggled against rufal headwinds down the Portuguese coast towards Cape St Vincent yesterday.

The nearest isobar is about as close as our local bar to the Mediterranean. Harold Cudmore said from the second-placed British maxi, Brent Walker. "We've sat becalmed off Estoril for much of the day wondering if we would have better luck rolling the dice in the casino."

The 80-footer remains 15 miles astern of Pierre Felhmann's leading Swiss sloop, Menti, which rounded Berlinga island, to the north of Lisbon, at 1.49am, 1½ hours ahead.

Jaguar, the Dutch maxi, the clear leader in the IMS division, was third, rounding the island at 8.00am yesterday, 1½ hours ahead of Albert Mireles's Swiss sloop, Mente.

Jeff Johnstone, the American helmsman whose father, Don, designed the class, took the fourth race of the J24 Rothmans world championship at Dun Laoghaire yesterday (Keith Wheatley writes).

Light conditions delayed the start by nearly two hours, but at the gun the series leader, Jim Brady, led the bulk of the fleet up the right of the course into an eight-knot breeze. But it was a wrong decision, for the fleet was taken the left side on the first beat and held their positions to the line as Brady finished 38th.

RESULTS: Fourth race, 1. J. Johnstone (USA), 2. P. Felhmann (Switzerland), 3. J. Brady (USA), 4. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 5. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 6. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 7. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 8. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 9. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 10. J. Mireles (Switzerland).

WINDSURFING

RESULTS: Men's 1/4 final, 1. J. Johnstone (USA), 2. P. Felhmann (Switzerland), 3. J. Brady (USA), 4. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 5. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 6. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 7. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 8. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 9. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 10. J. Mireles (Switzerland).

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MOTOR RACING

Senna is given a glimmer of hope

By JOHN BLUNDEN

THE German grand prix, which marks the beginning of the second half of the 16-race Formula One world championship, will take place over 45 laps of the Hockenheim circuit on Sunday afternoon in an atmosphere of increasing speculation about the future make-up of the leading teams.

This is the time of year when rumours begin to circulate about which drivers will be switching to different teams. Nigel Mansell's decision to retire at the end of the season has served fanned the flames of speculation.

Of immediate concern is the renewal of the battle for supremacy between the Ferrari and McLaren teams, which is causing the drivers' world championship to look increasingly like a head-to-head confrontation between Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna. After three successive victories for Prost, Senna badly needs to win on Sunday. He will be mildly encouraged by the fact that during the recent Goodwood tyre tests at Hockenheim his car was fractionally quicker than his French rival's.

The German circuit is less demanding than any of the three most recently used, in terms of optimum high-speed cornering

performance — where Ferrari definitely has the edge. Perhaps the McLaren will be able to run with a little less wing and exploit the power advantage from their Honda engines more effectively.

The Benetton team is likely to be the dark horse this weekend. At Silverstone, the full potential of the latest version of the Ford V6 engine was masked by Senna's Nissels slipstream.

At the other end of the field, the Ligier team will be among those for whom the early call alarm bells will have been ringing this morning. It is something to which they will become accustomed on Fridays during the coming months when they will be required to take part in the frenetic hour of pre-qualifying for the main grand prix. It is the penalty for their poor race results during the past 12 months.

For ESPRIMO Larousse, however, the days of pre-qualifying are over because they are now numbered among the 26 seeded entries which are joined by the fastest four pre-qualifiers in the main practice and qualification sessions.

FOR THE RECORD

ARCHERY

RESULTS: Men's 1/4 final, 1. J. Johnstone (USA), 2. P. Felhmann (Switzerland), 3. J. Brady (USA), 4. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 5. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 6. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 7. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 8. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 9. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 10. J. Mireles (Switzerland).

BADMINTON

RESULTS: Men's 1/4 final, 1. J. Johnstone (USA), 2. P. Felhmann (Switzerland), 3. J. Brady (USA), 4. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 5. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 6. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 7. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 8. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 9. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 10. J. Mireles (Switzerland).

BASEBALL

RESULTS: Men's 1/4 final, 1. J. Johnstone (USA), 2. P. Felhmann (Switzerland), 3. J. Brady (USA), 4. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 5. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 6. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 7. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 8. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 9. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 10. J. Mireles (Switzerland).

BOWLS

RESULTS: Men's 1/4 final, 1. J. Johnstone (USA), 2. P. Felhmann (Switzerland), 3. J. Brady (USA), 4. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 5. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 6. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 7. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 8. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 9. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 10. J. Mireles (Switzerland).

CRICKET

RESULTS: Men's 1/4 final, 1. J. Johnstone (USA), 2. P. Felhmann (Switzerland), 3. J. Brady (USA), 4. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 5. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 6. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 7. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 8. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 9. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 10. J. Mireles (Switzerland).

SWIMMING

RESULTS: Men's 1/4 final, 1. J. Johnstone (USA), 2. P. Felhmann (Switzerland), 3. J. Brady (USA), 4. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 5. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 6. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 7. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 8. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 9. J. Mireles (Switzerland), 10. J. Mireles (Switzerland).

TENNIS

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● RACING 35
● CRICKET 36

FRIDAY JULY 27 1990

Gooch leads the onslaught

By ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

LORD'S (India won toss): England have scored 359 for two wickets against India.

GRAHAM Gooch spent the entire opening day of this Cornhill series demonstrating the error of his ways. By the close of play, Mohammad Azharuddin can have been in no further doubt that he was wrong, calamitously wrong, to put England in to bat as Gooch rushed to the brink of his first double century in Test cricket.

Given the make-up of their team, and the blissful weather, India's best route to victory simply had to be by dictating the game with the bat. Azharuddin, for reason best known to himself, surrendered first use of an easy-paced pitch and Gooch, as surprised as he was grateful, sentenced him to an indefinite period of repentance.

If there was an attacking theory behind the decision, Azharuddin was clutching at elusive straws. If his motivation was negative, protecting his batsmen from the real or imagined perils of a first morning at Lord's, he was misguided.

In 1986, Kapil Dev inserted England and won by five wickets, but yesterday's entirely different conditions gave the batting side an early chance to impose authority on the series.

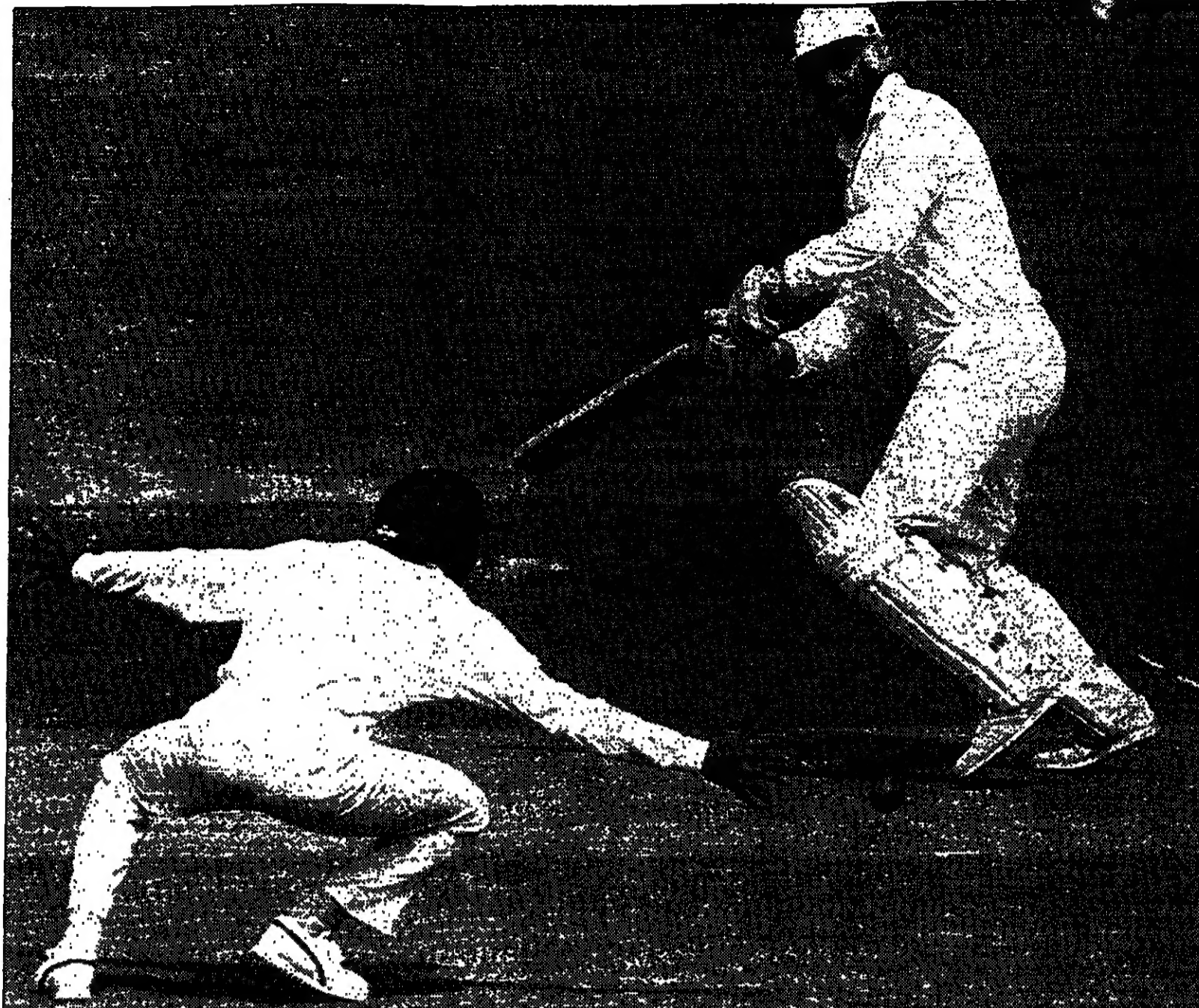
Gooch, continuing the most prolific period of his career despite the discomfort of an ear infection, ensured that the gift was not spurned.

Surviving the first session with occasional good fortune, principally when badly missed by the wicketkeeper, More, on 36, Gooch was thereafter in complete and majestic control. A century, his fourth in consecutive first-class matches and his thirteenth of the season in all cricket, came with a sense of inevitability. It was, however, no more than a basis for negotiation as he proceeded to lift his average for the season above 100.

The longer the day went on, the more one-sided it became. India's bowling was toothless and their fielding sometimes wretched. Gooch put on 127 with David Gower, the subject of a highly dubious umpiring decision, and another 218 with Allan Lamb, the subject of further generosity from the hapless Azharuddin, who spared him the early ordeal against spin which so plainly inhibits him.

The unbroken third-wicket stand is a record for England against India, and to add to the orgy of statistics, Gooch and Lamb became the first players ever to score four Test centuries at Lord's.

It was as disastrous an opening day as the most



In control: Gooch, the England captain, beats the dive of Manjrekar at forward short leg on his way to an unbeaten 194 at Lord's yesterday

optimistic Indian can have feared. As India can now aim for nothing more than survival, however, England may very well come to regret restricting themselves to four bowlers, and no second spinner. Good though it is to see Morris rewarded, it is clearly an unwarranted luxury to have him at No. 6 against this opposition.

England have not enjoyed such a day with the bat, at home, since the final Test against Australia in 1985. Gooch made 196 that day, his highest Test score, while Gower, then the captain, made 157. For much of yesterday it seemed that the same partnership was to dominate again.

The Indian gamble had received some support when Atherton was out in the sixth over. Kapil, having switched ends to bowl with the wind, hit his off stump with a ball which hardly deviated off line.

Gower stroled into the

sunlight for his seventeenth Test appearance at Lord's. No one has played on the ground more times and, now, no one has scored more runs here. When he reached 21, Gower passed the previous record aggregate at Lord's, held by Boycott.

There was one sumptuous cover drive amid some dedicated defence. Gower had something substantial in mind but, when he had made 40, he thrust forward to Hirwani and the ball flew to silly point, apparently off the pad.

Umpire Plews's raised finger penetrated even the iceberg exterior of Gower. His head went back, a disbelieving message was muttered to the heavens and, as he departed, he tapped the ball back into the stumps.

Gooch reached his hundred with a four through mid-on against Sharma. He repeated the shot next ball and, thoroughly pleased with it, was now in that subconscious mode, formidable to watch, hurrying purposefully around the crease between balls as if anxious for the next offering.

After tea he saw Hirwani out of the attack with a series of emphatic sweeps, and Shastri, who had grazed in the outfield for too long, was brought back. It was now too late to disorientate Lamb, who was on the way to a century scored off only 122 balls. Only by comparison with Gooch did he suffer and both may have a good deal more to offer today.

● The England batsman, Alec Stewart, is likely to return for Surrey in the county championship match with Gloucestershire at Cheltenham tomorrow. He has been sidelined for the past ten days with a back strain and will have a fitness test today. The team coach, Geoff Arnold, said: "It looks almost certain he will play."

Why India should have heeded wisdom of W.G.

By JOHN WOODCOCK

HAVING gained a priceless advantage by winning the toss at Lord's yesterday, India at once handed it back by putting England in. It was the last thing they could afford to do and the first thing they must have regretted.

The first Test match I ever saw, in 1936, was between England and India at Lord's. Then, too, the captain successful in the toss chose to field. "On a fine morning following hours of rain, Allen, captaining England for the first time, took the always debatable step of putting his opponents in," Wisden said. Then, though, India were nothing like as experienced in batting as they are now, and although Verity was "disappointing in length", and Vijay Merchant and D. D. Hindlekar made 62 for India's first wicket, England went on to win easily enough.

Captain unrepentant

THE decision to put England in at Lord's has caused a rift between Azharuddin, the Indian captain, and Bedi, the team manager, who clearly feels Azharuddin made the wrong choice. But the captain stood by his decision even though centuries by Gooch and Allan Lamb have already put the game beyond India's reach.

"I don't know why they were put in — you had better ask the captain about that," Bedi said last night. "I think our batsmen would have wanted to bat first. Personally, I would have wanted to bowl

last year, unless it was at Brisbane in 1954, when Len Hutton did the same; a course he was virtually committed to taking when, 48 hours before the start, he announced an England side without a spinner. "Bill [Edrich] will probably bowl some off-breaks," he said, as though we were meant to believe it.

For the state match against Queensland the pitch had offered the quicker bowlers much early assistance. It had been a good first morning on which to bowl. At the 'Gabbas it often is. But as soon as the Australians knew that England were virtually certain to field first in the Test match the curator made sure, as he was bound to do, that the pitch was at its best on the first two days. I can see him now at work with his scythe before the start. Australia declared at 601 for eight and England lost by an innings and 154 runs.

Peter May and Bob Willis both put Australia in at Adelaide of all places, and lived to regret it. May saw it as his last chance of getting back into the series (I fancy he wanted, too, to delay for as long as possible the moment when he would have another England batting collapse on his hands) and Willis acted, it seemed, in a moment of perversity. It was W. G. who said there is no harm in thinking of asking the other side to bat so long as that is as far as it gets. If things have changed since his day — and there are times when it has — made every sense to field — the Indians will know now why he said it.

Bad timing by new sponsor of League Cup

By STEVE ACTON

NATIONAL Power's proposed four-year, £4 million sponsorship of the Football League Cup was the source of further embarrassment yesterday, when the nationalised company announced losses of £605 million and 5,000 redundancies.

The announcement raised doubts as to whether the company could be privatised in its present form, and, more immediately, whether the time was right for the Football League Cup, even though £4 million would represent only modest expenditure by National Power, its timing was hardly diplomatic.

A spokesman for National Power admitted yesterday that sponsorship of the League Cup, the third most important domestic football competition (which was previously sponsored by the Milk Marketing Board and Littlewoods), had not yet been approved by the board. The first round is only a month away.

The latest developments came as an unwelcome surprise to League officials, who had believed that the sponsorship had been approved by the National Power board last week. They had hoped to make an official sponsorship announcement on Tuesday or Wednesday, combining it with the draw for the first round. The League belatedly announced the first-round draw yesterday but delayed once again the announcement of a new sponsor.

National Power, which paid £2 million to be ITV's official sponsor during the World Cup, had been expected to provide sponsorship worth £1 million a year linked to the retail price index.

Ian Schooler, the corporate commercial manager for National Power, said: "The board is still considering it but it is very busy at the moment. The matter is still under consideration: we have not yet had time to complete a review. After all, this was only mooted two days ago."

"Obviously, it is something we are interested in or we would not have got into discussions with the League. Asked when an announcement would be made, Schooler said: 'I do not know. It is still being discussed at board level.'"

National Power would not need Government permission for the proposed sponsorship and Schooler said: "It is our money and our budget. It is up to the directors of National Power to say whether it is worth the money or not."

When asked if the League had acted prematurely this week by stating its intention of making a sponsorship announcement, linked to the draw, Schooler said: "I can't give you an answer. That is something you will have to ask the League."

Andy Williamson, the League assistant secretary, said he was disappointed that a deal had not been concluded this week. He added: "We are still hopeful that sponsorship can be concluded with National Power before the start of the season."

He listed the League had alternative sponsors standing by: "First refusal still lies with National Power but our commercial department does have other firms in the fire," he said.

League Cup draw, page 37

Johnston is sent home

MO JOHNSTON, the Scotland forward, flew home in disgrace yesterday from Rangers' training trip to Italy following a dispute with the manager of the club manager, Graeme Souness.

Johnston was understood to

have been involved in a late drinking session at the training centre in the Tuscany hills. Souness said: "Maurice Johnston and I have had a disagreement on the standard of discipline that is required at Glasgow Rangers."

Moorhouse equals record yet again

By CRAIG LORD

ADRIAN Moorhouse reacted with anger and delight at equalling his 1:01.49sec world 100 metres breaststroke record at the TSB national swimming championships at Crystal Palace last night.

In matching his best time, the Olympic champion, aged 26, became the first British swimmer to set a world metric record at home since 1958. In the process he pulled his City of Leeds team-mate, James Parrrack, to the second fastest time in the world this year.

Moorhouse thought someone had played a joke on him when he looked up at the scoreboard to find he had repeated 1:01.49 for a third time: the first came at the European championships in Bonn a year ago, to be followed by his victory at the Commonwealth Games in January.

He said: "I thought it was a sick joke. The last time I equalled the record — I was disappointed, this time I am angry. I am sure I can go much faster. Under 1:01 is definitely on. I tied up in the last 10 to 15 metres and that's lack of rest. There's a lot left yet."

Moorhouse, who is aiming to break his record at the International European Cup in Rome in two weeks time, said that having Parrrack on his shoulder throughout the race had helped him.

Moorhouse, who turned a fraction ahead of Parrrack in 28.8sec, at the 50-metre mark, his fastest in a 100-metre race, opened his shoulders going out of the turn. The change of gear brought the crowd to its feet. They saw Moorhouse surge half a body length ahead.

The world record looked certain. But Moorhouse's stroke shortened as he tired in the closing stages. Parrrack touched two strokes behind in 1:02.09sec, beating all the times recorded in an Olympic standard final at the Goodwill Games in Seattle on Tuesday. Norbert Rozsa, of Hungary, was third in 1:02.93.

Moorhouse's world record was the first set in a British pool by a Briton since Ian Black, of Aberdeen, broke the 200 metres individual medley record at the Empire Pool, Cardiff, in 1958.

Paul Howe, of City of Birmingham, showed fine form to win the 200 metres freestyle in 1:51.07 just 0.39sec slower than his British record.

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SCOREBOARD FROM LORD'S

India won toss won toss

ENGLAND					
First Innings					
G A Gooch not out	194	6s	4s	Mins	Balls
		2	27	361	285
M A Atherton b Kapil Dev	8	1	1	22	20
<i>Bowled between bat and pad</i>					
D I Gower c Manjrekar b Hirwani	40				
<i>Pushed leg break to silly point</i>					
A J Lamb not out	104	16	16	181	129
<i>Extras (b 1, lb 5, w 1, nb 2)</i>					
	13				
Total (2 wts, 30 overs)	359				

R A Smith, J E Morris, P C Russell, C C Lewis, E E Hemmings, A R C Fraser and D E Malcomson to bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-14, 2-141.

BOWLING: Kapil Dev 22-3-81-1 (1-0-1-0, 7-2-18-1, 9-0-27-0, 3-1-18-0, 3-0-17-0);

Prabhakar 23-5-88-0 (no 3) (1-0-2-0, 10-3-38-0, 9-2-36-0, 3-0-17-0); Sharma 13-1-68-0 (w 1) (1-0-5-0, 8-1-14-0, 4-0-32-0, 2-0-17-0); Shastri 13-0-86-0 (7-0-84-0, 6-0-51-0); Hirwani 18-1-27-1 (1-0-0-0, 7-1-16-1, 5-0-10-0, 2-0-16-0, 5-0-16-0).

INDIA

N S Sidhu, R J Shastri, S V Manjrekar, D B Vengsarkar, M Azharuddin, S R Tendulkar, P K S More, Kapil Dev, M Prabhakar, S K Sharma, N D Hirwani.

Umpires: H D Bird and M T Plews.

TV TIMES: BBC 2: 09.30-10.10, 10.50-12.05, 12.35-18.30 (with racing from Ascot, 23.55-01.30, 08.00-22.00).

WEATHER: Sun and bright with some showers. Some showers later. Outlook for the weekend: rather cloudy with scattered showers at first, becoming drier and brighter on Sunday.

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Coach dismissed after letter to Gorbachev

SYDNEY (Reuters) — A letter to President Mikhail Gorbachev from an incensed Australian rugby union supporter has led to the dismissal of the Soviet Union's leading rugby coach and two players.

Craig Moran said yesterday that he had sent a letter addressed to "Mr M. Gorbachev, The Kremlin, Moscow" two days after the Australian captain, Nick Farr-Jones, had his jaw broken by a punch from an unidentified Soviet player in Sydney on March 28.

In the letter, which was accompanied by press clippings deploring the incident, Moran expressed his "disgust" at the touring Soviet team's behaviour. "If this recent display is an indication of how you would like to see the game played, it reflects poorly on your country," Moran, a recruitment agent in the computer industry, wrote.

Nothing happened for four months but earlier this week Moran said he received a

letter from Vladimir Ilyushin, president of the Soviet Rugby Union Federation. "We can only agree with you that the rugby is the game of gentlemen and there is no place for roughness on a pitch," the letter said.

"We inform you that, after returning from Australia, Victor Masyura is dismissed from his job as the USSR national team main coach while players Igor Khokhlov and Aleksandr Bychkov are withdrawn from the USSR national team. We hope that Nic [sic] Farr-Jones has recovered and plays the rugby as good as before that said incident."

Farr-Jones, who is touring New Zealand with Australia, said: "I find it quite bizarre that Mr Gorbachev should get involved in something like this and that the coach, who had nothing to do with it, should be implicated."

England's young prop, pages 34 and 37

Choice of course leads to problems

By MITCHELL PLATT, GOLF CORRESPONDENT

DEANE Beman, the US PGA Tour commissioner, believes that the Masters and the United States Golf Association (USGA) face "huge problems" because of the controversy surrounding the US PGA championship, being played next month at the all-white Shoal Creek club in Birmingham, Alabama.

United States racial equality groups have denounced Shoal Creek as an unsuitable venue, and have been further antagonised by a statement from the owner that a private club can invite who it likes to be members and keep others out.

The controversy has attracted nationwide interest, and the US government is understood to be monitoring the situation in company with the Augusta club, where the Masters is played.

Shoal Creek was founded in 1977, staged the US PGA championship in 1984 and, like Augusta, has no black

Llewellyn's chance to clinch title

THE British Midland Ulster motor rally starts from Belfast at 2pm this afternoon, with David Llewellyn, of Wales, looking for his fourth consecutive victory. If the farmer from Haverfordwest achieves the victory, not only will he establish a record, but he will also clinch the Shell Oil British open championship for the second year in succession with two events still to run.

He has dominated the championship this year, winning three of the four races and placing second in the first event, in Yorkshire, only because his turbo blew on the final stage.

But he will not start as favourite in Ulster. His four-wheel drive Toyota Celica has a distinct advantage on the gravel — his three wins have been in forest rallies — but the narrow stages of Ulster shift the balance in favour of Malcolm Wilson, of Cumbria.

In his Sierra Sapphire Cosworth, which is considerably lighter than Llewellyn's car.

After the long, hot, dry spell, some thunderstorms are forecast over the next couple of days, which will make the stages very dangerous and the choice of tyres important. The rally involves 21 stages with stage miles totalling 188.

"I don't feel under pressure to win because if I don't do it this time then I have another two rallies to try and clinch the championship," he said. "The Ulster rally is a very tricky one, and if the rain does come then we will have to be very careful indeed, because after the recent weather if anything falls on the hot tarmac it will be like driving on ice."

The main battle will be between Llewellyn and Wilson, with Colin McRae, of Scotland, in a Sierra Cosworth, who won the Canis rally, also challenging.